

THE ANGLERS OF THE DOVE.

BY HARRIET MARTINEAU.



CHAPTER I. BUXTON IMPROVEMENTS.

THERE was not much life in the society of Buxton Baths towards the end of the year 1568, or, indeed, towards the end of any year. There were not many people there after the closing of the lodging-houses for the winter; no visitors, and not a great number of inhabitants. Some little stir existed, however, in the beginning of this December, for the Countess of Shrewsbury thought proper to come to the Hall just after everybody that could leave Buxton was gone. Nobody was surprised, because Bess of Hardwick had long ceased to surprise anybody. She was amusing, however; and it was with pleasure, on the whole, that the residents in the neighbourhood of any of the Shrewsbury seats heard any morning that the Countess had dropped down among them in the course of the night. When she had been a week at the Hall, on this occasion, a cheerful report began to spread that possibly the Countess would keep her Christmas at Buxton. The Earl was in attendance on the Queen in London; and no mortal in attendance on the Queen could ever

tell where he might be, and what he might be doing, three days hence; so whether the Earl would come to Buxton was doubtful. What was not doubtful was, that the Countess was perfectly safe from any summons to Court, and that she would not wait for the Earl to spend her Christmas where and in what manner she pleased. She was exceedingly busy at present, laying plans with her architect, Master Gadbury, and settling accounts with him for the finishing of Hardwick Hall; and before that enterprise was well off her hands she was bent upon discovering some means by which the medicinal spring might be made to bubble up within the inclosure of the Hall at Buxton. Every day she and Gadbury and half-a-dozen attendants came riding to the Baths, consulting and tasting and measuring; and the amusement was too welcome to the inhabitants to be neglected: so there was always a little crowd about the entrance, and plenty of help for holding the horses. Every word that could be caught up was repeated and spread abroad. If the reports of what was said were incorrect, it was owing to

the difficulty that some people had in making out whether it was the lady or one of the gentlemen who said this, that, or the other ; for the Countess found a half-manly dress convenient : and, as her attendants spoke to her with deference, and she had no idea of moderating her own powerful voice, it was excusable to mistake Beas of Hardwick for a builder of mansions, or for one of her own grooms. An incident which occurred on occasion of her fourth visit to the baths at length fixed many minds in the knowledge of which was the Countess.

The people outside saw, in the midst of a snow-storm on the hills, a man and horse plunging down the steep path from the brow with so much haste that everybody said it was a post. It was so. In a few minutes a splashed and damp rider on a reeking horse appeared close at hand, followed by breathless servants from the Hall, who came to find the Countess, and possibly to take their chance of hearing some news, as the messenger's business was to deliver into the Countess's own hand a letter from the Earl.

The letter was presently in her hand, opened, and read. It was evidently very short, for it was thrust into her bosom in half a minute. That half minute changed her whole aspect and mood. Her well-browned face was flushed ; her eye was, if possible, haughtier than ever ; but her manner was thoughtful ; and, after saying " Let us go home," she spoke no more. The idlers went about saying there was doubtless some news ; but nobody could say for certain what it was. By night it was insisted by some people that the Pope and the Spaniards had landed, and were marching straight upon Buxton ; others said the Scots had crossed the Border, and would be at Buxton in twenty-four hours ; while others doubted whether Queen Elizabeth was murdered, or Queen Mary had got away to France. The one settled point was, that the Countess would not spend her Christmas at Buxton.

None of these things were true : but the Countess could scarcely have been more moved by any of them than by what her husband had really written. His letter contained but six lines. The Queen had just said to him what it was important for his wife to hear at once. The Queen had informed him that she meant to trust him as she would trust few. His wife would see what this meant ; and she would not lose an hour in preparing at some one, if not all, of his country-seats a fitting reception for the guest who might be already on the way.

The Countess did not lose an hour. Before she slept she had consulted with the architect about alterations at Tutbury, alterations at Chatsworth, alterations in the Sheffield Castle, and at the Halls of Buxton and Hardwick and Chartley,—all having the same object,—the separation of the best suite of apartments from the rest of the house, in regard to attendance by servants, and the privacy of the occupants. Gadbury wondered ; but he had too much work to do to spend time in speculation. If the Queen was coming to visit Lord Shrewsbury, he hoped he might see her, and perhaps be mentioned to her ; but she could hardly be thinking of making a progress to all

Lord Shrewsbury's mansions,—and in mid-winter too. It struck him afterwards as odd that it had never occurred to him that there was another Queen in England at that time who had occupied three or four castles in twice as many months. But political news travelled slowly, and arrived irregularly ; so that public curiosity was not so strong as it became after the roads were improved. Last May, Queen Mary of Scotland had crossed the Solway, and been taken to Carlisle. In October, there had been a sort of trial of her cause in a conference at York. As nothing but confusion had come out of that conference, another was held in London, the result of which was that Queen Mary must remain where she had come of her own accord till the English Government and the Scotch Protestants had settled the difficult point, what to do with her.

" What shall I ever do with her ? " thought the Countess that night, many times over in her sleepless hours. It would be a dreadful restraint. She herself had always had her own way ; it was well known that Queen Mary liked hers ; and moreover that she so accomplished her aims as to convince some people that she had dealings with the powers of darkness. What were two such women to do, if compelled to live together ? Here was a loss of all freedom and independence ! Yet no,—it might be possible that the will and pleasure of both might be gratified through the resource of travelling. If Queen Mary should become as weary of captivity as most prisoners are, she would be glad to fall into the Countess's habit of moving from one country house to another, all the year round. Determining to render all the Earl's houses worthy of royal occupation, the Countess fell asleep on the happy idea.

When her husband met her at Tutbury, to make the necessary arrangements, she found that he had had but little quiet sleep for many nights. But for the suspicion which he would incur by refusal, nothing could have induced him to undertake a charge so burdensome in every way as the custody of the Queen of Scots. Sir Francis Knollys had given him some idea of the mere cost to her hosts of such an inmate : but that was the smallest evil.

" I will not be ruined," protested the lady Beas, " for any stray princess on earth. The days of wandering princesses are over,—or should be over if I had my way ; and those who will wander must pay their charges. I shall ask one of the Queens, or both, which is to pay for the dame's lodgings, and, till that is settled, I shall suspend the works ordered."

" The works must go on," said the Earl ; " and as for paying the workmen, leave that to me. I am responsible to the Queen."

" Yes ; but you are responsible to me too, for the improvements ordered at Sheffield Park and Wingfield. Those works are not to be stopped that we may give the funds as alms to a pair of Queens."

" We cannot help ourselves, when the sovereign lays the charge upon us," said the Earl.

" That is what I mean to make out," replied the lady. " This Frenchwoman must have property,—jewels, plate, and funds abroad. Would

I touch them? Not I! But I can make her comprehend that she must provide her own entertainment, and that of her servants. It is quite enough for us to give her protection."

"Put all such thoughts out of thy mind, Bess," said her husband. "I have positive orders from the Queen that her kinswoman shall have truly royal entertainment, inasmuch as the eyes of the whole world will be upon the house where she is. It would be treason to give room for any one of the Scottish party to say that, while my guest, any person, high or low, had to pay charges, as at an inn."

"Why then come to us? Why could she not stay at Carlisle? She sought English soil; and there she had it."

"Her windows looked towards Scotland; and it was easy to make signals. There were two windows from which she might possibly escape into the arms of any party of Border horsemen. Bolton Castle was safer, as being moated round."

"Then why does she not stay at Bolton Castle?"

"It is not far enough from the Border. From her extreme unwillingness to move, it is supposed that she can carry on Scottish intrigues there. It required all my courtesy to reconcile her to the new arrangements; and I believe it was Knollys who prevailed after all."

"Knollys's manners prevail where yours fail!" exclaimed the Countess. "Then the world is turned upside down."

"It was not his courtesy, but his bluntness which wrought with her," said the Earl. "She had learned to be afraid of him at Carlisle, where he reasoned with her whether she ought to be deposed or not; and now, every word of his goes through her. At the first hint from him that she must have reasons for objecting to the solace of new scenes and a milder climate, she changed colour, and became cheerful in her inquiries about my house,—my several houses."

"And about anything further?"

"She could not inquire of me respecting my wife," observed the Earl, smiling.

"She knows me by repute, no doubt," replied the Countess. "Every Stuart, from Inverness to Paris, has heard of Bess of Hardwick."

"It does not need to be a Stuart to have heard of Bess of Hardwick," said her husband.

"See now if I do not make a better gaoler—Now, here you are showing your weakness already,—shivering at the word gaoler as if I had prophesied your being the lady's headsman! Let us call ourselves what we will, we are this woman's gaolers. For safe custody alone—"

"Safe and honourable custody, Bess; imprisonment softened and sweetened by every device of hospitality."

"Exactly so. In that view, you will see whether I am not the best turnkey in England. I will baffle her intrigues by carrying her from place to place, with all dutiful profession about her health and amusement."

"Those are matters for my government," observed the Earl.

"We are alone," replied the wife, half-laughing. "We need not keep up appearances at this moment. You do not understand how to govern

women: you will do exactly what I say; and you are welcome to the credit of it. But we need not trouble ourselves yet with hypocrisies."

"Pardon me, Bess. It is not a question of hypocrisies. I have duties that you do not know of, and thoughts which you cannot at present understand."

"Tell me all, or I will not play hostess to this troublesome guest," said the Countess.

"I cannot tell you all; and you will play the hostess," the husband said quietly.

He was right. There was in the case a woman's spirit more masculine than that of Bess of Hardwick herself. Bess had seen enough of the fate of ladies in prison under the Queen's displeasure to avoid such punishment for herself: and she was by her husband's side in all his proceedings from the hour when, on the 14th of January, he received the Queen's command to assume the charge of her kinswoman of Scotland. By her husband's side, the Countess rode to Bolton Castle, and, with more graciousness than had ever been seen in her before, she requested the commands of her Grace in everything pertaining to her accommodation or pastime.

CHAPTER II. THE BORDER OF NEEDWOOD FOREST.

THE sun had been hidden by black clouds for a week, when, in the afternoon of the 3rd of February, the weather rapidly cleared up. The rays of the low sun lay along the paths of Needwood Forest, and made the moss at the roots of the leafless trees almost dazzling from the vividness of its green. The rock which overhung the river Dove threw the waters into shadow; but the projections of the cliff, and the windows of the castle which crowned it glittered in the sunlight. The summits of the Peak in the distance were snowy; but the lower ridges wore that warm red hue which distinguishes a hilly country on a bright winter day from the grey or pallid plain, as summer from winter. The river banks resounded with human voices; for everybody was coming abroad to see the sport after a week of bad weather. The rapid river which flowed below Tutbury Castle was never frozen over: but there was a broad pond on the verge of the wood where the ball-play of the season flourished. There were almost as many players as men and boys in the neighbourhood, this afternoon. None but very old men were absent. The women and girls came to see, each busy as she moved about, or stood to watch the game. Some few were spinning with the distaff: but most of them were knitting. Some of the knitting was gay in colours; and there seemed to be a great deal to say about it, judging by the eagerness of the groups who compared their works. People in London, and near the coast, might complain of the number of foreigners who had of late entered the country; but in rural places much prosperity was certainly created by the introduction of a new trade. The Flemings and the French seemed to have inoculated the whole kingdom with their arts; for the silk manufacture was now going on from the borders of Wales to the shores which overlooked France.

The gossips could not agree as to the precise hour when the Earl and his train had arrived the

evening before. The wind had been so high that the horses could not have been heard, even if there had been no snow on the ground. It was certainly after dark; and the fugitive Queen might well be so fatigued as to keep close to-day. Several curious neighbours had been prying about; and some had invented reasons for knocking at the castle gates; but the porter was surly. He would not tell when the cavalcade arrived, nor what the Queen of Scotland looked like, nor whether the train of Yorkshire and Derbyshire gentlemen stayed or rode away.

While the women's tongues were rattling about this, and the players were shouting and wrangling over their game,—every cry reverberating from the opposite rock,—all were startled into silence in a moment by an apparition appearing from behind a promontory of the forest which stretched into the road. There was a pair of horsemen abreast. Then there were threes and fours, to the number of a score or upwards. Then there was a group of ladies,—six, riding two and two, with horsemen beside them. More gentlemen followed; and a company of grooms closed the procession. The gossips had a good opportunity for gazing, as soon as they had collected their wits; for one of the ladies checked her horse, and was evidently asking questions of the Earl. The whole cavalcade stopped: the players were desired to throw a cast or two; and the Earl's servants in the rear were beset with inquiries by their village acquaintance.

In a few minutes the signal was given to move on; and the cavalcade wound up the steep road to the castle gates.

That was the Earl, certainly; but how was it? Had they been for a ride after dinner? Or had they not arrived yesterday, after all? The game was broken up by the general curiosity, though one young man did his best to induce his party to conquer their antagonists while light enough remained.

"He is thinking of nothing but the game,—that Sampson Rudd," observed Polly Chell to her father's lodger, the itinerant parson who was here to preach for a week or two. "He would not stop his ball-play to look at a queen."

"He has everything to learn about the royal and noble persons," replied the priest, Dr. Pantlin. "What should he hear of the affairs of England while he was learning to weave in Switzerland, and getting his head filled with the stiff notions that Calvin's followers mislead our English youth by?"

Polly thought Sampson Rudd must remember enough of England to feel English people's interests. He had been absent only twelve years; and he came back now, very learned about silkworms and silk fabrics, but apparently not knowing a queen from a milkmaid, or a popish princess from a Bible-reading sovereign.

The Reverend Dr. Pantlin doubted whether Sampson was so indifferent about the popish part of English affairs. Polly would see what the lad had to say.

"It is too dark for more play, Sampson," said she, walking where he was kicking the ball on the ice for his own amusement.

"Then where are the lights?" he added. "I remember when we played a dozen years ago, we did not leave off for night coming on. Don't you remember the cressets on the pond bank? Why not have them now?"

"Because we are all thinking of something else, I suppose,—all of us but you. Come! do let that ball alone for a minute, and tell us what you think of the popish queen."

"I suppose she looks as queens do look," said Sampson, carelessly. "I dare say they are all nearly alike."

"All nearly alike!" exclaimed Polly, who had once seen Queen Elizabeth on a journey, and could now, therefore, compare two queens who had not exactly the air of twin sisters.

"Now you see how Calvin's influence works," observed the preacher.

"Why should they be all alike, Sampson?" asked Polly.

"It may be the habit of ordering everybody," he replied. "They naturally get into a haughty way, and speak loud, as this one did just now. And if they are broad and fat, and ride like men, and halloo to the grooms, it is from their loose way of living, naturally."

"Broad and fat! and hallooming!" exclaimed Polly.

"He does not know a queen from a countess, as you expected," declared Dr. Pantlin.

And Polly explained to Sampson that he had mistaken Bess of Hardwick for Mary of Scotland.

"The poor queen looked very gentle," she said. "She smiled about the game; but it was such a sad smile!"

"She is ill, no doubt," said the preacher. "The party were obliged to stop at Chesterfield, last night, they say, because she had such a pain in her side that she could not sit her horse any further. I believe it is true—I mean that they lodged at Chesterfield; for I saw both Felton and Stansbury in her train."

"Do you mean that you doubt of her illness?" asked Polly.

"One need not say that," replied the priest. "However full she may be of art and wiles, she may well have pain of heart enough to ache in every part of her body. She may have been ill, but she looks—"

"O! so sweetly!" exclaimed Polly.

"Very much so," Dr. Pantlin assented. They had all heard that it was so.

"Did you really not see her, Sampson?" said Polly; "that graceful, downcast, beautiful lady—"

"Was that lady the Queen of Scots?" asked Sampson, for the first time really interested. "I wonder whether I should know her again."

"I am afraid you lost your opportunity, looking at Bess," observed Polly.

"I did not look much at either," replied the youth. "Queens are not much in my way; and if I cared for any, it would not be a popish one, whose relations afflict the godly in France, and who has had three husbands, and would not be sorry, they say, to take a fourth."

"It appears you do know something about queens," Dr. Pantlin observed.

"Surely I know about the Frenchwoman, and this Scottishwoman, seeing what they do against religion. I was sent for, when I came through London, to interpret for the poor fellows from Havre,—the garrison that were driven away by the Papists. They brought the smallpox with them; and when several of them were at the worst, there was a call to some of us who had lived abroad to speak for them. The things that they had to tell!"

"What things?" asked Dr. Pantlin.

"The treatment of the godly in France; and worse still, in the Low Countries. There are thousands upon thousands of poor Flemings who have had their tongues cut out."

"Those Havre men must have been in the height of the fever when they said that," Polly quietly remarked.

"No, it was when they were recovering, and taking the air," Sampson said.

Dr. Pantlin knew the fact also. The pretence for the cruelty was that those protestants should be deprived of the means of protesting. Where were they now?—Most of them were dead; for few could survive that injury: but still there were hundreds, perhaps thousands, living in England and in Switzerland. Dr. Pantlin was, in fact, himself acquainted with two of these dumb martyrs.

"I do not believe that sorrowful lady had any concern in such doings," Polly declared: and as for her having had three husbands that was certainly an idle story about one so young.

Again the preacher justified what Sampson had said; and Polly observed, with a vexed air, that travellers' tales were very wonderful. She turned homewards in the twilight, and Sampson stayed behind when she walked away.

Polly was wanted at home,—sorely wanted. Her father was in from the field; her mother was weary with the tending of the ewes, and had brought in two or three half alive lambs, which began to make a noise as the warmth of the chimney corner revived them. The good wife remarked that they had made her neglect her own dear lamb; and she leaned over the crib in which lay her sick child, quietly crying because the noise prevented him from sleeping. The pottage was simmering over the wood fire; but the board was not spread, for the serving woman was milking. Polly exerted herself, under some sense of fault for having lingered in the twilight longer than she ought. She set the trestles in the middle of the floor, and lifted the boards without troubling anybody to help. Then she brought down the trenchers from the shelf, and placed them on the rough boards; and lastly, she spread a linen cloth over a part of the upper end, and put upon it a pewter platter from the beaufet, and a pewter mug, and a small salt-cellar and spice-box. These were for the preacher, who was to be the yeoman's guest till over Sunday. This done, Polly fetched down, from their proper shelf, three or four iron cups, furnished with hooks, and filled with fat. She supplied each with a wick, lighted it, and hooked it upon a staple in the wall. She turned out the pottage into its bowl, threw down the wooden spoons on the board, placed her

father's three-cornered chair, and then begged her mother to go to supper. She would take little Dick on her lap the while.

This was about to be done when one person after another entered. The first was the preacher, who had only to lay aside his hat, say grace, and sit down to supper. Before his platter could be filled, there was a knock at the door,—a hasty knock, and one of the hangers-on of the Castle came in. The Castle could not accommodate all the gentlemen who had joined the Earl's riding party; and the neighbours must be hospitable. Here was a gentleman who must have a lodging.

"I would make the gentleman welcome," said Farmer Chell, "but that there is not room. The Minister is here."

The Castle servant showed no reverence to the minister. On the contrary, he observed in an undertone that a man who preached in the forest when there were churches all over the land, might make shift to sleep in his own sort of vestry. There was room enough in the woods for all the priests that were shut out of the churches, and moss and dead leaves enough for all their beds. Dr. Pantlin declared his intention of being no hindrance to anyone: but yeoman and housewife would not hear of a clergyman being turned out of doors after dark. It was the other gentleman who must take his chance.

The other gentleman seemed quite willing to take his chance. He declared that he was so used to every sort of accommodation in his fishing and fowling rambles, that he did not know till next morning where and how he had slept. He was so merry and good-humoured that Polly presently returned her little sick brother to his crib, and went to work to fill a bedsack with fresh straw, and a bolster-sack with sweet dry chaff. These, a sheet and a rug, made a good bed on the broad settle in the living-room.

During his hearty meal, the stranger explained that he had taken horse at short notice, and without any previous notion of attending her Grace of Scotland. His dearest friend and nearest neighbour was Mr. Felton, of the Manor-house by Chesterfield.

"Then you are Mr. Stansbury?" observed Dr. Pantlin.

"I am; and I remember you when you had the pulpit in Derby. Felton and I were making flies for our spring fishing after supper yesterday, when we heard the tramp of horsemen in the avenue. There were so many that we went out to see whether we were under her Majesty's displeasure, and her Grace's arrest. But we were told that a lady was overwrought with her journey, and unable to go further; and we opened the doors to as many as chose to enter. The lady turned out to be her Scottish Grace; and when we saw the jades she and her ladies were mounted on, the wonder was that all were not sick alike."

All present agreed that it was a strange want of courtesy to mount these ladies on miserable horses. It was not like the Earl to do such a thing.

"It was not the Earl's doing; no Talbot would do it—"

"Unless Bess of Hardwick," somebody observed.

"She is no Talbot. But, in truth, it was nobody's fault. There was a lively alarm of a swoop from the Border, at any moment. The ladies opposed themselves to any removal with a vehemence which looked ominous ; and Sir Francis Knollys sent out for horses, and must take such as could be got."

"I wonder he and the Earl consented to stop at Chesterfield," the Minister observed.

"There was a watch set against the Borderers, all the country round," Stansbury explained. "I told Felton that, as host, he must take her Grace's part against all comers, night or day ; and I verily believe the poor lady hoped the occasion might arise. I never leave Felton, nor he me, when any adventure befalls ; so I rode on in the train to-day, to see the end of the march. We thought to ride back, or to take lodgings together in the nearest inn ; but her Grace will not hear of Felton being dismissed to-night: so he is the Earl's guest, and I am yours, at your service."

At this moment the servants came in—the two men from the field and stall, and Bridget, who had been milking the ewes. They were to have their supper ; and there was no more discourse at the upper end of the board about the company at the Castle. Dr. Pantlin said grace for the meal which was ending, and then for that of the servants, which was beginning. Stansbury did not leave the table ; but the Minister observed that he turned half away, and that he certainly crossed himself.

"You perceive," said Stansbury, "that I am not of any new persuasion. I am of the Church."

"Nor am I of any new persuasion," said Dr. Pantlin. "I am of the Church as it was before the passions and lusts of men corrupted it."

"Yes, yes ; we know our grounds of difference," said Stansbury, refusing by his manner to enter upon any religious discussion. "We are each out of favour with the government of the day : and if we must discuss the matter of our churches, we had better take the only common ground, and find fault with the sect which has usurped the pulpits of the kingdom."

"Better say nothing at all," remarked Farmer Chell. "The days are past when a man might say what he liked within his own four walls. Now that these foreigners come in swarms, and settle where they see fit, asked or unasked, one is never sure that all one's neighbours are honest. And when they are honest, they are hardly civil. They frown at any jest, and make such a noise about any innocent pastime, that we have little pleasure in our feast-days, and little freedom at any time."

"You may thank the Papists for that last," his wife remarked. "They are the real spies, and I dare say the gentleman knows it as well as we do."

Dr. Pantlin's smile said "Perhaps rather better ;" and Stansbury returned the smile. He said he hated spying and plotting—they were the curse of the land. Everybody was spying upon everybody else, and the merriment of Old England was spoilt. It was the proper punishment for the

violence which had been offered to the Church. When the silliest children of a household insisted on correcting their mother, how should there not be confusion, high and low? Here was Dr. Pantlin, a deprived pastor, preaching in barns or in the lanes; there was his pulpit at Derby empty, and the doors shut, Sunday after Sunday; there were the Anabaptists collecting crowds in the streets by their antics; and, if you wanted the true clergy, they were where they could give you no good,—shut up in the dark in prisons, and fed on bread and water. This was what merry England had come to!

Polly did not see that times were so bad for gentlemen who were free to amuse themselves as they liked. A man who sat at his loom abroad—anywhere in France or the Low Countries—was never sure of being in possession of his own tongue or his own life at the end of the day. . . .

“You mean if he is a Calvinist,” observed Stansbury.

“Yes, of course; but you Popish gentlemen can sit making flies for your fishing, and can ride on your own errands, and entertain Papist princesses without molestation from anybody.”

“Unless they plot,” her father put in.

“Oh! if they plot, they must expect what may happen. We are speaking of those who do not plot.”

“I have one plot,” said Stansbury; “and that is to get some fishing while I am here. Can I get any good fellow to go out with me?”

No man could be spared from the field at this season. Polly was of opinion that no craftsman could be induced to leave his loom or his workshop, because all were preparing for the Easter fair—the great market of the year. There was one neighbour, however, who preferred roving to sitting at his loom. Perhaps Sampson Rudd would go out with the gentleman.

(To be continued.)

THE ANGLERS OF THE DOVE.

BY HARRIET MARTINEAU.



CHAPTER III. THE HEART OF NEEDWOOD FOREST.

THE next morning was mild as a March day; and the sun came up so clear in the pale blue sky that it might be doubted whether anglers would like it. Sampson, however, knew the shady places all along the Dove, and engaged that the gentleman should have a fair chance for his sport. It was drawing near noon when the two were standing in the shadow of the rock below the Castle, with a little pannier of fish on the grass, when a shout from above made them look up; and they saw a man letting himself down the steep in a rash sort of way.

"What a hasty fellow you are!" cried Stansbury, as soon as the other came within hearing. "Why could not you come down by the right road?"

"We had just passed up it," answered Felton,

"and I thought I would not trouble the warder to fumble with his keys so soon again; and you seemed so near! and the way looked easier than it is."

"Yes, indeed; or do you suppose my Lady would leave it open?"

"It is not unguarded: there is no point unguarded. The sentinel warned me. I must show him that I am safe."

And Felton leaped over the stream by the scattered rocks, and waved his hat towards where a pike gleamed on the terrace above.

"What shall I do with all my fish?" asked Stansbury. "Some must appear on my yeoman host's board: but see what we have caught in three hours!"

"Send them up yonder for her Grace's table," Felton advised.

"You are not in earnest?" said Stansbury.

"Are these such fish as may appear at a queen's table?"

"No doubt: and if you had seen the supper we sat down to last night, you would believe that your offering would be very graciously received."

"Her Grace is ill-pleased at her reception? That was sure to happen."

"It was: but there is reason. Bess of Hardwick will need some training before she can fitly order the entertainment of a princess;—not a Scottish amazon, but a lady tenderly reared in the French court. Her Grace does not conceal her disgust this morning."

"Then I will venture: but if she is displeased—"

"I will take the blame on myself: and so I will if Dame Bess quarrels with you."

"Dame Bess may say what she will of me and my fish: but we will pick out the best for the Castle."

The party sat down to sort the prey. The finest were taken charge of by Sampson, who marched off with the pannier on his shoulder. The gentlemen amused themselves with stringing the rest on birch twigs and long rushes.

"There is a dark sentinel up above there," observed Felton.

"No doubt: wherever her Grace is there must be at least one."

"Yes; but she is attended everywhere by her own chaplain. I do not mean him."

"I did not know that more than one was allowed," said Stansbury.

"You are dull to-day. The dark sentinel wears light-coloured clothes."

"Plots already!" exclaimed Stansbury.

"That is of course," replied Felton.

"But it is not of course that I should hear of them," said Stansbury; "and I had rather not, unless you, as my friend, require it."

"Nothing of the sort. You and I naturally share all we know: but I will stop wherever you please in my confidences, now and always."

"It is not like us to have any doors of our minds closed to each other," said Stansbury; "and I shall never have any secret from you. But look you! it is not that this woman is dangerous, and of doubtful report, but that I, for my part, have no interest about her fortunes, and no right to possess any power of injuring her."

"Is it not of importance to every son of the Church that a Catholic sovereign may be in the heretic's seat, if loyal men do their duty?"

"My friend, this is mere wildness!" said Stansbury. "After ten years of heretical rule, which has certainly made the kingdom prosperous with industry and trade, and which has satisfied the world of the genius of the woman who reigns, whatever her impiety, can you suppose that a princess, who for genius has only beauty, who is reviled by all earnest heretics, and who has failed in every scheme she ever was concerned in, will mount the English throne over the neck of her who fills it, and who so commands the homage of her people, that they themselves say there is magic at work somewhere?"

"My view is different—different from what it has been," observed Felton.

"Since you have seen the dark sentinel?"

"No; I have not exchanged a word with him. He sits there cross-legged, fashioning her Grace's habit for her rides; and I have no call to accost the castle tailor the first morning. I judge by the open evidence of public affairs. I judge by the new severities against papists, and the hunting of the deprived ministers, and the coldness shown towards the colonists in their poverty as refugees, and by the terror of the noblemen of the court, and by the common rumours of the Queen's imperiousness of temper, that the state of her kingdom does not please her as it did; and that possibly she may herself not be so satisfied as she was of the firmness of her seat. This is only what thousands of men are thinking. True, very few may be saying it; but men will look in one another's eyes, in such times, to learn more than the tongue speaks."

"I trust you have not let the dark sentinel look into your eyes, my friend. Sooner than he should imagine what he saw in mine, I would close them,—would feign sleep in her Grace's very presence."

"You could not, Stansbury. There is but one person who could drop asleep in such a presence: and that is Bess of Hardwick. She did it last night. A slight glance of her Grace's turned the Earl's eyes towards his lady; and there she was sound asleep, with her head resting on the back of the settle."

"And the Earl?"

"The Earl made such apology as he could; in which he was but ill seconded by Lady Bess; for she scarcely disguised a stretching of her limbs on waking, and alleged that the slow court pace in journeying had disposed her irresistibly to slumber."

"I fear there will be bickerings among the ladies," observed Stansbury.

"Assuredly there will be; and then we know what will happen among the gentlemen. The Earl meant loyalty to his Sovereign when he undertook this charge: but it will cost—"

"A crown?" whispered Stansbury, following his friend's glance round the spot where they were seated.

"A crown, perhaps:—perhaps that which a crown contains," Felton replied in a low tone. "Some great catastrophe must ensue from the tangle of affairs. Yes; it is true; there might have been a way out if her Grace had remained in Scotland, or gone anywhere but into this kingdom. But she is here; and—"

"And we had better await events, without looking too curiously into the issue," said Stansbury. "I am satisfied to fish in the Dove, and leave the dark waters of state intrigue for another sort of anglers. Felton, be one with me in this. Nobody else can have such a claim upon you. Abide by me; and let it stand on our tombstones that we were two Derbyshire squires, who lived in friendship, and died in peace, in a time when other men quarrelled, and every parish had a war in it."

"So be it," answered Felton, rising when his

friend had put up his fishing-tackle. "Whither now?"

Sampson was approaching. Of course he had seen nobody but the porter. Only the porter and one other person,—the tailor of the establishment,—a fellow in sufficiently gay clothes, who was conferring with the porter about the time it would take to obtain some material for his work from London, if Stafford or Derby could not furnish it. It was a silken lining that was wanted; and some trimmings of a nature which Sampson understood. The tailor thought it lucky that the youth had arrived at that moment, and had desired him to prepare patterns of the commodity without delay, and carry them up himself.

Sampson was now dismissed to his loom, with a string of fish in his hand, and a silver coin in his pocket,—well satisfied with his morning's work.

"Is that tailor your dark sentinel in light apparel?" asked Stansbury.

"No doubt. Can he make any profit of the youth?"

"He will find him a silk-weaver; and further, a stout Calvinist, fresh from Switzerland; and further, a fellow thoroughly familiar with the ways of this neighbourhood."

Felton was silent; and the pair sauntered on into the forest. It was past the dinner hour, and yet far from supper time. They fancied that they might find dry wood in the sheltered part of the forest, where they might broil their fish.

They followed one path, and another, and another; but each led to some open space where snow was still lying, or where it had in melting soaked the wood which lay about. They were very hungry before they lighted on a track which soon led them within scent of wood-smoke. This track they pursued till it brought them in view of a low cottage, made of wattle, and plastered with clay, and thatched with fir-branches, from amidst which the thin blue smoke rose into the still air. Here was a fire ready made.

"Who lives here?" asked Felton; a question which was answered by a laugh from within, and an invitation to come in and see.

Having entered, the friends were no wiser. A man of middle age sat on the settle. A bundle of papers and books lay beside him: and, as far off as she could get,—that is, close by the door, sat a woman, across whose lap lay a sick child. When she looked up, and the child began to complain, Stansbury recognised her as his hostess. In great surprise, he asked whether she had actually brought that child all the way in her arms. Not altogether in her arms, she said: she had carried him on her back, part of the way. A mother would do much, she explained, for the hope of obtaining her child's cure. She was urged to wait a little,—only a very short time, and Stansbury would help her home with her burden. But she would not hear of it. She must instantly depart. While Felton was talking with the man about broiling the fish, Dame Chell was bending her mind to humble entreaty that Stansbury would tell no one of her having been here. The explanation that she gave was that Dr. Pantlin, now her husband's guest, was daily giving medical advice and physic, with his other ministrations: that

thus far her child had been rather worse than better since the preacher's prayers for him began: and she could not be satisfied without inquiring from a higher authority whether she was in a right or a wrong course. Stansbury promised everything she asked, and she turned to take her leave of the host. When, however, she saw the preparations made for cooking and eating within the house, she sank back upon her seat in evident consternation. She would not, or could not explain herself; but gathered up her forces, and crossed the threshold, tottering under her burden, and saying with white lips that it was the boldest deed she had ever heard of; and she feared it could never come to good.

"Did you hear what she said?" asked Stansbury, seeing that the host was smiling. "You heard her? What can her warning mean? It seems you are an apothecary. Is she afraid of your poisons?"

"She is afraid of my art. Persons who have an art—"

"You mean black art," said Felton.

"What the ignorant call so. Those who have knowledge and skill are exiles, even more than the priests of your Church. Your priests are wandering in foreign countries, but they are among friends. I am living under the trees which I climbed for birds'-nests when a boy; but I am exiled from human society. No man will eat with me, or walk with me, or sit on the same bench, or open his mind as to a comrade."

"We are not well enough acquainted to be comrades," said Stansbury; "but we will dine together, and walk afterwards, if you will."

The Wise Man carefully closed the door, and then sat down to the board; but he refused to appear abroad with his guests. Their generosity might ruin them, he said.

As his heart opened under the long lost pleasure of free conversation, his visitors could say anything they wished; and what they wished was to know what could compensate to him for such isolation as he incurred by his choice of a way of life. His reply was, that there was no choice in the case. He had sought knowledge early, thinking no harm; and one day—one terrible day—he discovered himself to be in possession of a knowledge, not only surpassing other persons' in degree, but different in kind. Nothing could then be done: his fate was sealed. He could only endeavour to do good with his power, and take such pleasure as he could in the pursuit of wisdom. That pursuit had its pleasures, he emphatically declared.

"But, surely, you see human faces almost every day?" asked Felton. "How many days in the year pass without your hearing a human voice?"

"Formerly I was sometimes weeks together without hearing a footstep in the wood," the Wise Man replied; "or worse, the boys that were nesting or gathering berries made game of me; or, if they were afraid of what I might do to them, I knew that their fathers scorned me. For the last ten years the fate of my order has been changing; and now we have attained nearly as much honour as perhaps we ever shall."

"How do you account for that? But stay," said Felton, interrupting himself; "we will inquire further when you have finished eating. We will not spoil a repast which you say is a sort of festival to you."

The Wise Man was brightening every moment; and of the three he perhaps enjoyed most the rare wine which he brought out of an inner apartment of his cottage. He said he seldom touched wine; and thus he had some to produce on this singular occasion. He asked his guests, laughing, whether they were not afraid to pledge him; and they laughed in reply.

"I perceive you are not superstitious," he observed, when the fish-bones were removed, and nuts were on the board with the wine; "but nearly all the world is in these days. This is the answer to the question you put just now—that before men's minds were disturbed by a change of religion, their affairs and beliefs went on in a regular course, and their priests were their resource in all their perplexities. Since there have been two religions, or several, and men have either to judge for themselves or choose among various oracles, the growth of superstition has become remarkable."

"You find it so?"

"Yes, indeed! If I encouraged the resort of the people to me, I might have more power, more repute, and infinitely more money than any priest, or preacher, or religious leader within a hundred miles round."

"And why do you not? Nay; I meant no offence," said Felton, perceiving that he had hurt his host's feelings. "You spoke of using your knowledge for good, and I supposed that the more power you had the more good you would effect."

"Not so," replied the Wise Man. "The people come to me for charms; and if I explain that they are medicines, they at once conclude that I am ashamed of my charms, and beguiling them with false pretences. If I were to encourage all who would come to me, and to act upon them as it is in my power to do, we should see a worship of Satan set up by my means; and my will being against it would rather help than hinder. Another consequence would be, that I should be burnt alive; but that would be right if I had acted like a real priest of the Devil."

"What, then, is your plan, if I may ask?" said Felton.

"I wish it to be known by those who will vouchsafe to attend to it. There are so many who revile me—as Dr. Pantlin will next Sunday—without dreaming that I may have a case to state, that I may well be thankful when young men like yourselves—men fixed in the old faith, and therefore composed enough in mind to do justice—ask for my own explanation of my plan of life. My first duty is to keep up my insight into human affairs—"

"Do you mean a preternatural insight?"

"Not preternatural, but, in regard to the condition of the general mind, premature, and therefore special. I religiously sustain my knowledge of what is happening, and must happen. This is my first duty; and next to it comes the secluding myself to the utmost from popular resort, for the

reason I have given. After that comes the easy task of imparting, whether in the form of medical advice, or counsel about conduct, or information which may be useful."

"Political information?"

"Political information among others."

"How is it obtained from you?"

"Simply by asking. It rests with me to give or refuse it."

"If I were to ask you what further adventures are in store for the lady now within the Castle walls yonder—"

"I should refuse to give it, because it is needless. It requires no magic to foretell that a princess so unhappy and so helpless from such causes can never seat herself firmly on a throne filled as the English throne is now; and that she could not reconcile parties at home; and that she would not even conceive of sustaining the honour and independence of England abroad."

"I suppose that is true," said Stansbury.

"But she cannot pass her life shut up in an English castle, with English courtiers for her gaolers," said Felton.

"Can she not?" asked the Wise Man.

"Impossible! The Christian chivalry of England will not endure it."

"The Christian chivalry of England may dare and do great things; yet this may not be one of the things that they can do. One may scale an impassable rock; another may bring stout heretics into the Church by a silken thread—"

"How applied?" asked Stansbury, looking up from his nuts.

"By the needle and shaping-board, and shears," the Wise Man continued: "and the highest below the throne may sink himself into the common huntsman or angler—"

Stansbury laughed, saying:

"I was beginning to believe in your black art, friend; but your art breaks down under you. We are not noble,—my comrade and I."

"You are squires from the next county: it takes no magic to know that much. And you are not the only anglers on the Dove."

"Go on," said Felton, in a voice which made his comrade look into his face.

"I will say no more," replied the host. "If it is plain to calm observers that yonder princess and the English crown are not made for each other—"

"But that is past argument," Felton asserted. "Her arms, her style, and title have always told another tale."

"To what end? Inquiring of me of the future, you hear me say that the English throne is not for her, and why. So much of the Christian chivalry of the country as may stake its fortunes on a miracle should satisfy itself whether the days of miracles are past."

"Who believes that?" exclaimed Stansbury.

"Except myself, everybody seems to me to be steeped in superstition; so that a miracle being necessary to any enterprise may just now be rather a recommendation."

"What you say is too true," replied the Wise Man; "and, till the Church is settled, men will pray for miracles, and expect them: but Christian

chivalry should be mindful of what it has in its charge. The whole life of chivalry is a choice between objects, with honour or perdition for reward of a right or wrong choice. Passing over the lower considerations of honour or perdition to the individual, let us admit that if there is an interesting and unhappy cause—

"An incomparable woman!" Felton observed.

"Well! an incomparable princess on the one hand, there is—omitting all estimate of our Queen—the peace and prosperity and freedom of England on the other. I do not wish to say more," concluded the host. "My words are doubtless thrown away even thus far."

"Not so," said Stansbury. "I agree with you; and I trust my comrade will remember your words as well as I shall."

"No doubt of it," said Felton.

"Not the less are they thrown away," persisted the Wise Man.

This persistence was remarked upon, and dwelt upon by the comrades during their walk back through the forest. They said it was unavoidable that a man who lived like an oracle in a shrine should be peremptory in his utterances: but not the less were they impressed by the Wise Man's conclusion.

As they came out of the wood a bowshot from the river, they stopped at the same moment. They were looking up at the Castle, as every one does at that spot; and they saw figures relieved against the pale yellow evening sky. They were moving figures.

"Is that a terrace walk?" asked Stansbury.

"Yes; and where you see those tree-tops over the wall there is a garden. That terrace is where her Grace will take her walking exercise. O yes! she will ride in the forest, and out to the chase; but her walking exercise will be daily on yonder terrace. See her now!"

"Which—which? They are but black forms against the sky. Ah! now they disappear against the dim building! But which was she?"

"Which?" replied Felton, impatiently. "If eyes cannot tell that form from all others... Is it possible to mistake Lady Janet Hamilton for her, or Grisel Douglass?"

"My dear fellow! consider the distance!"

"But you saw forms—you saw them move. Is there any bearing, any movement that could be mistaken for hers? Yet you have seen her."

"Once. I must bow before you who have seen her twice."

Felton did not smile. He was astonished to discover that he had not had his mind wholly filled with her all his life.

CHAPTER IV. DISCOURSINGS IN NEEDWOOD FOREST.

As the spring advanced it was everybody's remark that so many strangers had never before visited Tutbury,—far famed as was the Castle with Needwood Forest for its chase. It seemed as if all the Earl of Shrewsbury's abodes had become suddenly celebrated; for, wherever he and his establishment went, there was presently a throng of strangers. The Countess had put in execution her plan of removing her royal guest from place to

place; and therein she had shown great determination; for she was resisting the wishes of two queens. Her Grace of Scotland could not always repress her disgust at her mode of life, under such a guardian as Dame Bess; and, by a very natural peevishness, she dissented from the praises of Tutbury with which her hostess tried her patience. She had suffered much at Tutbury, she said; and she could not be expected to praise it. This was laid hold of as the occasion for a series of removals as the days lengthened. But, ill as Mary of Scotland liked Tutbury, she liked still less to leave it. At first, she declared her will to abide. She resented the indignity of being pressed for reasons: but it was necessary to assign some; and she complained of her health, and of the fatigues of travelling. This brought on a recommendation to try the Buxton waters; and afterwards the fine air of Sheffield Park. After a month's resistance, the captive found that she had only excited suspicion. A courtier or two appeared from London, and was introduced to her presence or not, as she chose: but, as soon as they were gone, she missed some occasional visitors,—she ceased to hear from her most punctual correspondents,—and she received, in fact, very few letters, and was restricted in her intercourses with even the few persons in the neighbourhood whose services she commanded. To the Earl she could speak as a gentleman, if not as a friend; and the Earl told her that his sovereign blamed him for permitting too much resort of strangers to his Castle at a critical season, and had herself ordered the new arrangements. Assuming that he was consulted, he gave it as his opinion that it would be greatly for her Grace's interest to disarm suspicion by ready conformity to any plans laid for her Grace's good, in health or otherwise. It was a bitter potion, the poor lady said,—this practice of obedience,—however sweetened by the courtesy of her host: but by resistance she might doom herself to close imprisonment. Her host did not gainsay this: and to Buxton they went.

Among the throng who saw the cavalcade descend the hill, and wind away through the now green forest, was Dr. Pantlin. He had been out of sight for some weeks, as men of his class found it necessary to be. Deprived clergymen were scarcely less abhorred by the ruling powers than Jesuit priests; and, if they thought fit to hold to their ministry, they could do it only on sufferance. Dr. Pantlin then had been on one of his rounds since February; and now, at the end of April, he appeared only in passing.

On the next Sunday it was plain that he had gathered matter for his discourse in attending on the departure of the Castle party. The church was closed, as happened very frequently, for want of a preacher. The Earl had applied to the universities for a man of learning and piety, to fill the parish pulpit: but the answer was that if the universities could not supply one-fifth part of the demands of the populous towns, they could not attend to rural parishes. One bishop had lately declared that he had but two preachers in his whole diocese. If the Earl would send up some promising young man, of sufficient instruction to read the service and a homily, such a person could be ordained on easy terms: otherwise there was no help. This left

the field of religious teaching open to the deprived clergy; and they were eagerly listened to, and zealous to use their opportunity.

It was seven years since Dr. Pantlin had spoken from a pulpit, as he did not let his hearers forget. This time he preached from a stump, firmly planted under a spreading oak in the forest. It was as lovely a spring Sunday as could be seen: but a gloom overhung the people and the service. The preacher was in more or less danger: among his hearers were some who suffered under the suspension of the lawful services of the Church: lovers were waiting, angry and disgusted, for some one to marry them: there were many infants not yet baptised: and Dr. Pantlin had been heart-wrung, that very morning as often before, to be compelled to refuse the rites of burial to a departed brother who well deserved them. His theme was one which moved hearts ready prepared. He described in his discourse the terrible interdict under which the kingdom had suffered in the time of King John: he showed what the Papal tyranny was which inflicted such horrors; and thence it was easy to show that by dallying with the Papal faith, even the heretical government of England was renewing the old penalties. The waters flowed, but infants were not baptised: marriage was honourable for all, yet those who would be joined in holy matrimony could not obtain the rite: the promises of the gospel of departing saints were bright and sure: and yet the dead were buried like dogs. Such was the retribution brought on society by the rightful priests being scattered abroad, while there were none ready to occupy their pulpits in their stead. There never could be a worse moment for closing the churches. At the very time when every Sunday and other holy day should summon the whole people to worship, as one rallying point for men's thoughts and wills, there was no chime of bells, no service, no exhortation; and the people sought out a word of advice wherever there was anybody who pretended to give it. Sometimes it was a necromancer in a wood, or in some dark hole in a city. Sometimes there was a resort to some barn where the blasphemous Anabaptists said and did worse things than the Pagans of old. Sometimes the unwary were led captive by the disguised Papists, whose toils were spread everywhere. Once drunk with the scent of incense, or lured to the secret chamber by the tinkle of the bell or the yellow light of the taper, the victim of the priests was lost, for this world and the next. While such were the horrors now going on in once merry England, there was no sign of repentance or godly sorrow. There was my Lady Go-fine in every neighbourhood, caring little for godly or ungodly arrivals on our coasts, provided only the latest fashion of attire came over too. No matter what Romish fox or Anabaptist hog was on board any smack from the Low Countries, provided there was a pair of silken hose, or a new adornment for the hair, or a special velvet for gentlemen's cloaks. If there were such dangers from fantastical vanities everywhere, what could be said of Tutbury in particular? There had been a whole train of Lady Go-fines for weeks past, showing their mincing gait on the terrace, or sporting in the woods: and if they were gone now, they

would come back: and, considering what was suspected of the sort of power employed by the chief witch of that strange company, there might be as much danger in hanging about the Castle in her absence as when she might be met at any turn. What he, the preacher, meant was that persons—and young men in particular—who wished to escape from blood and fire in this world and the next, would be wise to turn their backs on the Castle altogether. Or, if some must go as far as the gate,—as indeed provisions for the Earl's household must be supplied,—all messengers should keep outside the threshold, and have no speech but with the porter. Of the porter there was no harm known; but that was more than could be said for everybody who might, at one time or other, be in the porter's chamber.

The discourse was becoming interesting; for there were persons present who liked nothing so well as hanging about the Castle; and there were few of the hearers who had not secretly visited the Wise Man within a few months. Dr. Pantlin stopped while the interest was lively. After showing the contrast between the smooth order of daily life in former times and the disturbed state of men's minds at present, he terrified the timid of his hearers by telling them that, having the very enchantress of the Papacy in their midst, they must expect, by and by, to have their pleasant abode made what the lair of an enchantress always is,—a place of blood, and bones, and perdition.

Among the timid hearers Polly could scarcely be reckoned. She was as capable as other people of dread; but she was not scared by pictures of blood and bones, nor intimidated by hints of dangerous mysteries. She actually stole away behind the trees during the stir which followed the close of the discourse; and by the time Dr. Pantlin had obtained silence enough for the concluding prayer, she was quite out of hearing, on the way to the Wise Man's cottage.

"You have come to tell me about the child?" inquired the Wise Man.

"No. Mother told me, however, that she had shown him to you. He may be somewhat less pining these few days; but the neighbours may well say he is bewitched, seeing how he is, from week to week. What is it that ails him?"

"You would be no wiser if I told you the name of his disease. But he is not bewitched."

"No, no. I am not one who fears that way of being ill. But will the child recover?"

"That is a question which I never answer."

"You might tell me. I can be secret; and it may be best that I should know."

"I think otherwise, if you have no more wit than to press for an answer to such a question. What can be done for the child's ease shall be done; and I can say no more. What was it that you came to say; for it was not this?"

"You ask for the form's sake," observed Polly; "for you read thoughts, and know what is on my mind."

"I can guess, Polly. You are in a difficulty with Sampson."

"I am. I have no peace about it, night or day."

"You would have married him this month if there had been a priest within reach to marry you."

"Ah! if that were all! It may be at any time that a priest would come this way, and stay a day for the church rites. But whether ever to marry Sampson is my doubt."

Did he then think seriously of becoming a priest himself?

Never. The Earl showed him that his way was clear. He could read the service; and the university would have made him ready for ordination in a year; and the Earl was pleased to say that he was distinguished for piety; and he had only to throw off his wild Swiss notions—

"More easily said than done," observed the Wise Man.

"Only too easily done, however," sighed Polly.

"Why regret it?" asked her counsellor. "You dread the Queen's displeasure at her clergy marrying. But, you see, they do marry; and if she dislikes it, she cannot prevent it. You and Sampson might be very happy in your parsonage, so far out of the range of the Queen's eye. But I perceive that your difficulty is of another kind. Perhaps Sampson is no Protestant at all."

"I was sure you would know," said the sighing girl. "And now, what am I to do? If I marry him, I must be a Papist too: and if I break off from him, he will be suspected; and he will—O! I must do anything rather than betray him to suspicion."

"If I were he, I would avow the conversion," said the adviser. "Times are not yet so bad but that a man may follow his own religion, after a manner, if he keeps himself quiet."

"He must keep his secret," Polly declared. "Those who made him a Papist have pledged him to secrecy. Yes,—I know it is bad: but it is a thing done. They have their reasons—"

"Very strong reasons, no doubt. They hope, and by 'they' I mean in particular the Jesuit priest who masquerades as a tailor before the Earl's eyes—"

"Ah! I was sure you would be able to help me," said Polly. "You see what is going on up at the Castle as plain as if its walls were made of glass, and you were always walking round them."

"Far from it, Polly. That disguised Jesuit may well be suspected, if plain, guileless persons are watched, from the same suspicion, all over the kingdom. You may not be aware, but I was, that Sampson himself was suspected of being a Popish agent, from the moment he arrived here."

"Who suspected him?" asked Polly, indignantly.

"Warning was sent from London to the magistrates, and to certain trusty citizens."

"What a shame!" exclaimed Polly; "and he so proud of the twice-reformed faith, and of the courage of his Church, and of having himself picked up John Calvin's bowls when he played at Geneva on Sunday evenings. If they had once heard what Sampson had to tell, they could never have suspected him."

"Yet you say he is now a Papist. He must be very weak, or—"

The Wise Man paused, and Polly poured out the defence of her lover which had been collecting in her mind. Sampson had soon learned that the gay tailor was a priest; and that he wore his disguise in the pure love of human souls. He did not care for the humiliation of his function. He could cut out and stitch with gaiety of heart to draw stray souls into the Church—

"Ah! yes; I know," observed the Wise Man. "That is a very common story."

And then, Polly said, he had spoken so strongly to Sampson on the perilous pride and vanity shown in setting up against the Church which had for so many ages included all the wisdom—

"Ah! yes," said the Wise Man. "That is the way the story runs; but, to come to the end,—has not Sampson, just once, only once,—had a sight of the lady?"

"The Lady Bess? He has seen her often, for she busies herself much about the accommodations of the apartments which are not yet fully furnished. The Countess herself has given orders at several times to Sampson for silken hangings for two windows, and—"

"I did not speak of Bess of Hardwick; and you are aware that I meant the greater lady, Polly. I divine that Sampson has seen her Grace of Scotland, and has, moreover, heard the sound of her voice."

"Once,—only once," Polly admitted.

"I understand that sort of magical practice, at least," the Wise Man observed. "The same honey-pot catches many flies."

"Do not speak so of Sampson!" Polly entreated.

"Well! if he has not been employed to fetch and carry—"

"Do not speak so of Sampson!" cried Polly, more piteously.

"What, then, do you wish more from me, Polly? If he has been used by his new friends as an agent, I perceive that you do not know it. What is the question which weighs upon your mind? Are you doubting whether to turn Papist, and marry Sampson, or to leave him to his new friends? You cannot break off from him, you think, without dooming him to terrible things. Then, I suppose, you are intending the other course. But how can it be? Will yonder gay tailor tie the knot?"

"Yes,—yes,—that is it?" whispered Polly. "They wish it to be done while the household are mostly absent: they wish it done this week."

"Protestant as you still are? Well; they may be right in reckoning on your conversion as a certain event, if you are to contend alone against a Jesuit priest and a husband. Have you made up your mind, Polly?"

Certainly not, or she would not be asking counsel. It did seem a great deal to risk and to undergo; and she would not think of it for a moment but for the fear of destroying Sampson. He would remain, whatever happened. Nothing could induce him to leave.

"No; he is too useful," the Wise Man said. "He will remain while her Grace wants secret messages carried. If you marry him, Polly, you must bring none of your secret messages here. I cannot harbour anything of the sort."

"I would not be so suspicious as you—" Polly broke out : but she checked herself.

"Yes, you would, if you had seen what I have seen of princes and priests. Now tell me, Polly, has it occurred to you that it may be no such new thing to Sampson to be a papist?"

Polly stared.

"Suppose he should never have been anything else? I offend you, I see : that is no wonder. You will tell me that I do not know Sampson ; and that is pretty nearly true."

"I wish you would not make any guesses about him at all," Polly said, angrily.

"But simply hear what you tell me of him. Well and good ! but then you must not imagine you have my counsel."

"Let us say no more about it at all !" exclaimed Polly.

"With all my heart. Only this. After what you have laid open to me I am bound to tell you that wherever the Queen of Scots remains for many days together, there plots spring up, and simple people are won, and pious people are compelled, and selfish people are bribed, to serve the purposes of the plotters. Here, where her Grace has remained weeks instead of days, there are almost as many secrets hanging about the Castle as there are birds in the holes of the rock below it. Now you have your warning."

"I have," replied Polly ; "and I thank you for it."

As she was leaving the threshold, the Wise Man called her back.

"One word more, Polly. All the honesty in this case lies on one side. Simply to have no more to say to Sampson could not endanger him. Well ! I see you will not hear of that. Farewell, then ; but remember"—and he held up his hand in a warning way—"no state secrets, no papist secrets, no secrets of Sampson's must come here."

Polly would have been glad to be angry ; but she turned away without a word. The Wise Man was sorry for her.

"They want some clever, unsuspected agent in the village," thought he ; "and they will sacrifice her for the object. She will be bound by a secret marriage : her father's house is a convenient resting place for the Duke and his rod and tackle. She makes the channel complete, from her Grace to the Duke. I have said all that it could avail to say. If she can get over the hint of Sampson's having been only a pretended Protestant, and of her being made a mere tool of, nothing else that I could have said would have answered any purpose. As she walks now, she is turning all I have said of danger into a reason for uniting her fate with Sampson's to-morrow ; and the more I have touched her with suspicion of her being courted to be used, the more eager she will be to show a generous faith by an act which nothing can recall. I think she is safe about Sampson being a bachelor. These priests have few scruples ; but no one of them would venture upon marrying a man over and over, however convenient the wives may be as tools. And Sampson himself could hardly go that length, though he is more cunning than wise. Polly will be a real wife ; and then she must make the best of it. If she were not in love, she would

see how simple and safe an honest course would really be. But she will take the hard and doubtful one."

This was just what Polly herself was intending, as she made her way through the wood by round-about paths. She was proud of a lover who was a servant of the most unhappy and the sweetest princess in the world ; and she would brave everything to be his wife, and his supporter in peril and duty. As for becoming a Papist, she need not think of that at the moment ; her way would clear ; and it could be no good religion which would make her desert her lover, and seek her own safety, as soon as she was put to the proof. In this mood she was met by Sampson and his patron the tailor. The latter promised to show her the Scottish ladies' apartments, and the Queen's own walk on the terrace, if she would come up to the Castle before sunset.

Her heart was as soft as anybody could desire as she and Sampson paced the terrace at sunset. She had seen the apartment where the Queen passed the mornings, the desk at which she wrote, the frame on which her embroidery was stretched, and a book in which she had read only a few days before. She had sat in the window-seat which commanded a wide view over Needwood Forest, but from which one could almost step out upon the terrace. The sleeping-rooms above, she was told, might be opened to her some day soon, if she should deserve the confidence. Meantime, Sampson had a hundred little anecdotes to tell her of the Queen's sayings and doings. He was intoxicated by an interview he had had with her about some silk. Polly knew this before : but now she was confident that there was more than silk in the matter. Sampson was not a very good keeper of secrets, she now found. He was fidgety about a certain stand-point on the terrace ; he was restless when she looked over the parapet, and saw a man loitering by the Dove, some way off ; he was evidently delighted when her enthusiasm about the captive Queen grew to be like his own ; but he let her see plainly that he had kept some things from her which were occupying his thoughts very much. After watching the swallows flitting from under the castle eaves, and swooping to the river below, and reappearing high overhead ; after leaning over the ivied wall, listening for the cuckoo in the forest ; after hearing how the poor Queen had burst into tears, and sobbed for an hour after meeting a toddling child which had trespassed on the terrace, and how she had said that she had a baby son in Scotland ; after listening to fearful stories of the malice which had pursued this Catholic princess, even charging her with adultery and murder—suffering saint as she was !—Polly was in no mood to break for ever with Sampson, and the little world of the Queen of Scots. And if she did not break with them, she must join them. The worst trial would be living apart from them, in the very midst of the Queen's enemies. The tailor, however, threw out a hint that the time might not be far off when the Queen would be found to have fewer enemies than was supposed, and when Polly might There was no saying what Polly might not have arrived at.

(To be continued.)

THE ANGLERS OF THE DOVE.

BY HARRIET MARTINEAU.



CHAPTER V. THE SICK MAN AND HIS COMFORTER.

THE Earl of Shrewsbury was lying on a couch near an open window of his chamber at the Hall at Buxton when the Countess entered the apartment with the family physician.

"Bees," said the Earl, "you have not been telling the doctor that I am better?"

"Yes, I have," she replied; "or, if you are not better, you will be presently. You do not feel it yet, perhaps; but where is there such an air as this of Buxton? And there are the waters, too! Who could help being better here?"

"I do not like the air," replied the sick man; "and this sunshine makes me faint; and I am worse with every draught of the waters."

The physician gently closed half the shutter, and applied himself to the patient's pulse.

"I am not better, Doctor, am I?"

"You are not. It takes time to deal with an attack like yours."

"How much time?" inquired the Countess.

"That depends on various circumstances,

Madam. One of those circumstances is ease of mind. The more leisure his Lordship has to be ill, the sooner he will get well."

"Shall I give him more of the water?—another draught in the middle of the afternoon?"

"I should be rather disposed to omit the water altogether for a few days."

"Thank you, Doctor!" said the patient, fervently.

"What, then, instead of it?" asked the lady.

"The medicine I ordered yesterday will suffice, Madam, till—"

"Thank you, Doctor," the patient repeated.

"I would try entire repose," the physician observed; "rest and quiet, in this fine air. His Lordship should not be troubled with business, or with cares of any kind."

"That is impossible," said both the sick man and his wife.

"It would be the best wisdom," the physician insisted. "If his Lordship could lie here, and think of nothing, and sleep when able, I should

hope to see him on his horse again in two or three weeks."

The Earl sighed: the Countess exclaimed. The physician repeated his words, adding that patience was, in some cases, the best physic.

"And the hardest to get," the Earl observed. "If money could buy it—"

The physician remarked, cheerfully, that he saw a good deal of it in dwellings where there was no money to spend in physic.

The Countess offered several suggestions; and some of them, in regard to diet, were agreed to: but the physician was not to be moved from his decision that repose of body and mind was the essential thing.

When the Countess returned from her consultation with him in the next room, she declared that another physician must be called in. The Doctor was a very good man; but he was slow. He wanted energy; and he could not excite the energies of his patients. He did not understand the necessity of some cases.

"He does not see, as perhaps I do," said the Earl, "that something has happened to irritate you with my illness. Is it so, Bess?"

"If it be, he ought to have discovered it before you did."

"Discovered it!" exclaimed the Earl, raising himself suddenly. "Bess, where is her Grace? Tell me at once!"

"Her Grace is writing her letters in her own apartment."

The Earl sank back on his pillows, the pulsation of his ruff showing his agitation.

"Her Grace may well be trusted in my care," the Countess observed. "I am no lax guardian of such a charge: and perhaps she may be better watched when you are here than when you are by her side."

The Earl gently remarked that, in the sense in which his lady spoke, this was no doubt true: but that it should never be forgotten that one chief method of keeping their charge safe was to render her situation as easy as possible. Every little irritation was an incitement to her to desire to place herself in other hands. After any little ruffle with her hostess, she would naturally have many thoughts of the past, and every present trouble would sink deep.

"O yes!" said the Countess. "I know very well how she sits and broods over trifles."

"So would'st thou, Bess, if any one made a caged bird of thee."

"I do not deny it: but no cage should hold me long. Ay, I say so, though I have just boasted of my power to hold her. The truth is, there is but one Bess of Hardwick; and, gaoler or prisoner, Bess will always have her own way."

"In things possible," the Earl interposed. "Even Bess of Hardwick cannot make her husband well at pleasure. You smile. You are thinking that you would be well in a trice if you were the patient."

"Perhaps I am," she said. Then she startled her husband by flying to the window on hearing the tramp of horses, and shouting to the grooms. She quickly drew in her head, and observed that she must hasten away. Her Grace chose to ride

nearly an hour earlier than usual this afternoon; and there was only a moment to equip and attend her.

"Hasten, then," said the Earl. "But tell me in one word whether anything is wrong. What did you mean about 'the necessity of the case'? Is there any new necessity?"

"I suppose you will fret more if I keep it from you," said Bess, drawing from her bosom a large letter with a large seal.

The colour left the sick man's face as he read the address. "From the Queen!" he said. "And already opened? How is this?"

"I read it, to see whether it was necessary for you to be troubled with fresh orders," declared Bess, hardily.

"Go, now," said her husband, sternly. "And come to me as soon as her Grace shall be again within her apartment. Remember!"

"I shall not waken you if you are asleep."

"I shall not be asleep."

"You will have enough to think about for the rest of the day," said the unflinching wife. "Perhaps that letter will set you on your horse again sooner than the Doctor imagines."

Instead of infusing vigour into the sick man, the letter prostrated him. He could have no attendant present while he read; and he did not afterwards touch the bell which was beside his couch. He would have died sooner than let any one see the tears trickling down his hot cheek.

"These women are so hard!" he thought to himself, as his excuse to himself: "the one Bess and the other! Between them I have need of all my manhood; and I am but poor in manhood while this fever wastes me."

The letter was in the handwriting of Lord Shrewsbury's old friend, Mr. Secretary Cecil; but the style showed that it was in fact from the Queen. The Queen was surprised to hear that Lord Shrewsbury was now, or had lately been, at Buxton, for the benefit of the waters, whereof no intimation had reached her Majesty from himself. If he were out of health, her Majesty must be satisfied as to what order had been taken for the due custody and entertainment of the Queen of Scots. Two things lay near the heart of her Majesty. The first was that the Queen of Scots should lack no honourable and gracious attendance which could be given to any queen. The other was that the report still grew louder and more frequent about the needless opportunity afforded to her Grace of Scotland for troubling the peace of the realm, which it lay with his Lordship of Shrewsbury to see was not so disturbed. The resort to her Grace was not less frequent than before the last warning sent to the Earl, but only more cunning; and the plots of the strangers were so many throughout the country that there was no assurance who might or might not be drawn into them. The Earl, as trusted beyond any other of her Majesty's subjects, ought to feel the weight of the honour of the Queen's confidence, and to act as if her wishes were known to him by the power of his devotion to her. By that state of his mind he must now be aware that he must in no wise medi-

tate a retreat from his charge : but, if his sickness were real, and such as the vigour of his duty and affection to his sovereign could not at once dismiss, he must dispatch a summons without delay to Sir Francis Knollys, who understood her Majesty's pleasure in regard to her Grace of Scotland ; and Sir Francis Knollys, neglecting all other affairs, would act as her Grace's host till such time as Lord Shrewsbury should be able to renew his unremitting attendance.

It was a bitter pill : but the Earl had got over his grievances, and recovered a composed countenance before his wife reappeared.

"When did this letter arrive, Bess?"

"No matter when. Sick men should not count the hours."

"No trifling, Bess!" And he stretched his hand to the bell. She would not compel him to question his page, but acknowledged that the royal messenger had arrived thirty hours before. She declared that if her husband was chafed, so was she. Sir Francis Knollys knew the duty of the Queen's gaoler ; and he would assuredly step into the Earl's shoes, and win the Queen's confidence. His idea of the proper treatment of such a prisoner was sensible,—was, in fact, the same as her own, and—

"Yes," the Earl observed : "and between you, you will chafe the bird to burst its cage, or, failing that, her own heart : and then what am I to say to the Queen? Knollys drove her Grace hard at Carlisle with reasons why she ought to be deposed—"

"And good reasons they were," the Countess observed.

"Good or bad, will she not remember them when his name is announced? It is enough to make her dare any way of escape rather than meet him."

"That is the reason why I have not sent for him," said Bess, complacently.

"By which wilfulness you have adventured the more fatal displeasure of our own Queen. Bess, these caprices of yours must have an end. I must rule my own affairs, and keep my own honour."

"You must not be ill, then," the Countess decided.

Now, however, she sate by in silence while her husband summoned his page, gave orders to the chief gentleman in attendance about finding Sir Francis Knollys, and wrote a line in a trembling hand, as credentials for the bearer of his message, Sir Henry Bayes, whom he charged to bring Sir Francis Knollys hither, without excuse or delay.

"I suppose I must not speak," the Countess observed.

"To what purpose?"

"To advise that Knollys, who is probably still at York, should rather repair to Sheffield Park, to meet her Grace, whom I would myself conduct thither by the time he could arrive." Seeing her husband's perplexed look, she added : "There are reasons, as Sir Henry is aware, for such a course."

After a moment's reflection, the Earl repeated his former directions to his envoy, and dismissed him with a compliment on his ability to ride fast.

"Stay, Bess," he said, as she was about to leave the room,—perhaps to impose her own orders on Sir Henry. "Bess!" And his tone was irresistible : "sit down here, and tell me these reasons of yours. I will answer to the Doctor. I must hear these reasons,—all of them, and this moment."

His wife remarked on his being quite strong enough for business, after all ; and he did not inform her that he chose to do it now, because his senses might fail him before the morning.

"First, where is her Grace, now?"

"Where is her Grace now?" For the fifth time this day, I tell you her Grace is safe. Stay! would you like to see her? Nay, I did not say that she should see you, untrimmed and uncomely as at this moment. But let us try." And she so arranged a mirror, fixed outside the window, as that the Earl could command a portion of one of the garden walks, on which Mary of Scotland presently appeared, pacing slowly, and followed by two of her ladies. The Earl observed that she looked not otherwise than in health, but very thoughtful.

"That is because she supposes herself unseen," said the Countess. "When I am present, she assumes an air of carelessness quite unnecessary in the widow of two or three husbands. She is in surprising spirits just now."

"And she an exiled mother, and a deprived queen!" observed the Earl, as his eyes were fixed on the mirror. As the group passed out of sight, he desired his wife to raise the frame a little, that he might catch another glimpse. She did so, but too quickly and too far, so that a gleam of reflected sunshine caught the attention of the group below. Her Grace looked up, to see herself watched from the window by her hostess. She stopped in her walk, and inquired after the Earl. Her voice was musical as ever ; but there was something in her tone which jarred on his feelings.

"I know what that tone of ceremony means," he said. "She feels that she must wear a mask everywhere but in her bed."

"And at confession," said the Countess. "Pray do not forget the comfort she has in her priests and her parasites : and they may not be very few. My opinion is, that any man or woman who lives a life of plots, should think it no hardship to wear a mask every day and all day long. O, yes! she is plotting again. The Queen must have reason for saying what that letter says : and if she were herself as suspicious as we hear she has grown, we have cause enough for doubts of this dreary guest of ours. She ought to be removed from this place at once. I care not whether to Chartley, or Wingfield, or Tutbury,—no, not to Tutbury, yet—or to Sheffield Park. I said Sheffield Park, because it is nearest to Knollys,—if you will put him into your own place. 'What has gone wrong here at Buxton?' It is difficult to say exactly what : but the universal remark is that the baths were never so frequented before."

"It would be strange if it were otherwise, with a captive queen drinking the waters," the Earl observed.

"She drinks them at home here of necessity," the Countess answered. "I am thankful that

I persisted in having the waters led hither as I did."

The Earl, ill as he was, smiled at this, being aware that the water lost much of its quality by the process. He would not have smiled if he had been fully aware of the impression made on strangers by his wife's harshness in refusing to the Queen the permission to drink the water at the spring.

"Her Grace has as many wiles as a hunted bird," the Countess observed; on which her husband remarked, in a low voice, that nothing was more natural.

"On one pretence or another," the wife continued, "she passes through the assemblage at the baths almost every day. It chafes me to be dragged there against my will,—the very servants knowing that I would prevent it if I could. But there is more in it than that conflict of female wills which you pretend to smile at. I see faces in the assemblage which I should not see if her Grace were elsewhere—"

"That is probably the case with two-thirds of them, Bess."

"Yes; but I mean, plainly speaking, that not only have I seen Felton here these three days—"

"And Felton's friend?"

"That is of course: he and Stansbury are inseparable."

"Stansbury will not wreck the world; he is harmless enough."

"Very likely. But they hang about the Hall: and I cannot help fancying they have some way of passing letters. The gravest thing, however, is that the man who used to haunt our river at Tutbury is here also."

"He who stayed at Tutbury after we left it?"

"Yes; the very innocent stranger, as you supposed him on that account. I have more to tell you of him. But, bless me! you change colour with a word."

"Go on; who is he?" the Earl said, faintly.

"Speak at once, Bess, I insist."

"But I am not certain yet. In two or three days I shall know; but—if I am not mistaken, it is the man himself!"

"Norfolk!"

"The Duke himself! Unless my instinct deceives me. But you know I never saw him but once."

"Such an adventure is too audacious."

"Nay, but," said the Countess, "he did not appear at Tutbury at any time or place where he was likely to be seen by you: and he has arrived here only since your illness was noised abroad."

The sick man tried whether he could not rouse his strength to walk,—to sit up. If he could have mounted his horse for one half-hour, he might satisfy himself whether the Duke of Norfolk was haunting Mary of Scotland. But it was in vain. He could not hold up his head. Whether to send a messenger to Cecil or the Queen was the question. If the alarm was well founded, it was a sort of treason to conceal it for a single hour: and if it was a mistake, Elizabeth would never cease to taunt her servants with it. The Earl was persuaded to wait one day,—not unwillingly, as he shrank from disclosing his weak condition to his

sovereign. The Countess resolved to make out in that time whether the stranger was to be feared or no.

CHAPTER VI.—GOING TO THE FAIR AT CHEE TOR.

It would be a sufficient excuse to his sovereign for one day's delay, the Countess told her husband, that the occasion was favourable for observation of any strangers who might hang about the train of her Grace of Scotland. There was to be a wool fair held at Chee Tor, five miles off: the whole country round would be assembled,—some for business in the fair, and others for pleasure after it. Except in the track of Queen Elizabeth's journeys, such assemblages were never seen as at these fairs; for the commercial business of the kingdom was mainly transacted there; at them there were trials of skill with the national weapons; and by means of them were the popular sports preserved as the sovereign was known to desire. If her Grace of Scotland should be disposed to visit the scene, the suspected stranger would be present; and the demeanour of other suspected strangers could be profitably watched. In meditating how to identify the Duke of Norfolk, if it should be he, the Countess bethought herself that Gadbury, the architect, had been employed by the Duke, in restoring one of his mansions. She sent a swift messenger to Hardwick, where Gadbury was: and Gadbury rode the greater part of the night to attend the Countess's orders at her rising.

The Countess had not gone to rest, for her husband's fever ran so high that she would not leave him. The physician himself had not prevailed with her to deliver the patient to his charge. It was as undesirable that the sick man should, in a moment of wandering, speak of Norfolk to the physician as to any page or serving man; perhaps more so. When the Earl dropped asleep after daylight, she also closed her eyes; but, before she had slept half-an-hour, she was informed that her architect was below, awaiting her commands. She summoned him to the ante-chamber, and told him that if it was hard upon him to compel him to ride for the greater part of the day after a watchful night, she was herself under the same hardship. It was the pleasure of her Grace of Scotland to visit the fair to-day,—a spectacle indeed which a foreign princess ought to see; the Earl could not himself attend her; a friend who would take his place might not arrive in time; and she herself must play the part of both lord and lady. She explained that it might be long before she and her architect could have so good an opportunity of consulting about a market-house which had been talked of as the Earl's gift to the good people who resorted to the fair; and she had therefore sent for him. On pretence of learning how much he had done professionally in this kind of edifice, she made out that he had personally known several noblemen who were more or less interested about Mary of Scotland; and that he had had frequent interviews with the Duke of Norfolk, not more than six years before.

Her Grace was entirely gracious about taking this long ride. She lamented the monotony of the life her ladies led, and smiled upon any project for their amusement. It was a splendid August

day. The heat of the sunshine on the open hills was tempered by a pleasant breeze : and wherever the Buxton people looked out there were trains of country people, with their packhorses making their way in the direction of the fair. When her Grace mounted her horse, glances passed among the bystanders, for they had never seen her so beautiful. Her colour was high ; her eyes, if not sparkling, were full of life and sensibility, and her bearing had none of the languor which had become almost habitual to her. Ordinary observers made the remark that her Grace was possibly as well pleased at the diversion as any of her ladies could be ; indeed, she was young enough, though so often a widow, to relish a festival day. Closer watchers saw that her mind was full, as well as her spirits gay. The expression of her countenance told of something very unlike levity within.

When the first ascent out of the valley was passed, the stiffness of the cavalcade was relaxed. The bells of the packhorses, far and near, seemed to exhilarate the ladies ; and yet more cheerful were they when the breeze brought the clang of church bells. Every church in Derbyshire sent out its bell music on occasions of public holiday. When the party reached the moorland, there was the bleating of innumerable sheep ; and the foreign ladies were told that there were, within the county, as many as twenty thousand in a single flock. There was a great deal to be related of the popular discontent about enclosures, and of the endeavours of the clergy and the great landlords to convince the yeomen that by an enclosure they might each save the labour of a shepherd, and secure the manuring of the arable land. The question of the concentration of the sheep, and the better care of the fleece thus practicable, or of their dispersion over the hills and moors, whereby a regiment of shepherds was required, seemed to interest Mary of Scotland. She observed on the great extent of moorland in her own kingdom, and on the chances of increasing the production of wool. When Felton and Stansbury joined the cavalcade by a bridle path in the hills, her Grace summoned them to her side, as Derbyshire men, to give her information. While they were deep in the ostensible discussion of wool and grazing as against tillage,—a subject on which Bishop Latimer was quoted without any appearance of horror, the Lady Bess exchanged a few words with her chief man at arms. Here were two papists added already to her Grace's train : it must be looked to that the number did not increase too far.

There seemed to be no reason to apprehend any difficulty. When the cavalcade paused on any ridge to survey the scenery, there were none but country people in sight. Country gentlemen there were, jogging on towards the fair ; but they seemed to know nothing of the presence of any stray princess in their county. Most of them were unaware of the existence of any rival to their own Queen ; and the rest had not heard of Mary's arrival in England. For fourteen years to come they would hear more and more of her ; but as yet there had not been time. It was only by means of these fairs that they heard any news beyond the rural incidents of their own parish. They were aware that the country had been

growing prosperous under the rule of Queen Bess ; and they would willingly have done anything in her service that could be proposed : but they had everything to learn of the politics of the case : and if told, at the moment when her Grace of Scotland turned her horse on the ridge, that that lady called herself, and was called by her train of foreigners, the Queen of England, as well as France and Scotland, they would have stared at her as much for her odd impertinence as they now did for her strange beauty.

At the fair all imaginable articles of ordinary consumption were sold retail, on the spot where the Earl had thoughts of erecting a market-house. The Countess seemed to forget the presence of her guest while conferring with her architect on the subject. She allowed the whole party to sit waiting in the hot sunshine,—their horses irritated by the flies, and their ears assailed by all the din of the fair. This was not all pre-occupation. She desired to observe who would venture to address the queen, and whether any attempt would be made to withdraw from her vigilance. Nothing of the sort happened. There was some ridicule perhaps of the Countess herself, which the queen did not repress. As for the rest, the gentlemen brought fruit and whey to the ladies, and busied themselves in learning whether the games promised much amusement. When the Countess rejoined the party, she made some approach to an apology for having kept them waiting. If she had seemed to neglect the convenience of her mounted guests, she said, it was for the sake of people who had to go on foot,—and some of them barefoot ; and who had to bear not only the heat of the sun in August, but the winter blast, and the snowdrift, and the autumn rains. Fewer of them would be lost in the hill-fogs, perhaps, when there should be a market-house with a bell in it ;—a bell which should be to the shepherds round like the shore-beacon to the mariner in stormy nights. Her Grace smiled upon the apology, and at once took an interest in the market-house,—putting Gadbury's wits to flight as she, reputed a witch on that account, was apt to do, as often as she addressed herself to any stranger. To be accosted by a queen was not altogether a new thing to the architect. He had been called to attend his own sovereign when she rode through the streets of Norwich, and to the rising grounds made famous to that generation by Kett's rebellion. He had guided her Majesty to Kett's Castle on the hill ; and had expounded to her the antiquities of Norwich Castle, and the architecture of the Bishop's Palace, at which she had been lodging : and never once had he felt confounded, as he now did, when spoken to by a disgraced and exiled queen about a market-house in the Derbyshire hills. By the time her Grace had passed on towards the green where the archery was to take place, he had thought of several things which it would have been well to say. He followed, in hope of another chance ; but he was so lost in vexing himself about his failure in manners that he saw little of what was going forward. He was conjecturing what the French and Scotch ladies would say, when alone, of the breeding of Bess of Hardwick and her architect.

Bess of Hardwick was dismounting, meantime, finding it the pleasure of Mary of Scotland to see the archery. There was a fine level space at the foot of the Tor; and a group of ash and birch-trees, affording shade at a point which overlooked the butts. It was not possible, by that year, to see good archery in every county of England. Notwithstanding Queen Bess's admiration of the bow, it was quite out of fashion; and she was wont to say that she and archery should go out of the world together. In old-fashioned districts of the kingdom, however, cross-bow practice was still sustained; and there were rivalries of parishes and families which could not be allowed to expire for a generation or two. When proclamation was now made for the archers to appear, not only did several yeomen come forward, but some half-dozen gentlemen, to challenge a judgment of their skill. Her Grace of Scotland was seated on cushions under the shade, with her ladies behind her, and the Countess stationed by her side. The latter overheard, as she approached, the submissive speeches of Felton and his friend, who were kneeling beside the queen. They could not say that they were not bowmen, in the sense in which country gentlemen still were; and, if her Grace desired it, they would try their skill. They would challenge the Countess, if it might be permitted. They had no doubt of her ability to shoot with anybody present.

The Countess never refused her sanction to active sports, for man or woman. Her own chief bowman had foreseen the occasion, and had brought her bow, her gauntlet, and all that she needed; and when she appeared at the station opposite the butts, a loud cheer went up from the great crowd for Bess of Hardwick. Many said that there was not a stronger arm, nor a truer aim among the archers of all England.

Eager as she appeared, and really was, in watching the shots, she observed all that passed round the Queen's rural throne. She believed there was opportunity for more than whispers,—even for an exchange of letters, amidst the jestings, and offerings of fruit, and of trifles from the market. She was considering how best to be in two places at once, or, to employ Gadbury, when she saw, among the yeomen in homespun on the green, the man for whom she was specially watching. After satisfying herself that this was the Duke of Norfolk, or a magical likeness of him, she beckoned Gadbury, and sent him to make an inquiry of this very man about the butts: and when she observed that, after answering the question, he drew back, and mingled with the crowd, she proclaimed that she was about to use her woman's privilege of selecting her adversaries, and summoned him as one of the four archers who should compete with her for the great cheese, which was to be the prize of success.

The yeoman advanced, with repeated obeisances to the Countess, after the manner of country fellows. The Lady Bess glanced at the group under the tree, and saw the flush which overspread the cheek of her royal guest at the moment when the competitors took their places. Once more she singled out the yeoman, and

observed to him that it was but courteous to invite her Grace to a share in the sport.

"Carry my compliments to her Grace," said she, "and say that it will be a crowning honour to the sports of the day if she will let fly a bolt, like the rest of us."

"Too great an honour, surely," was the reply.

"If you knew her Grace, you would not think so," said the Countess. "She is full ready at times to join in lower sports than this. I have seen her, not only at bowls in the alley, but dancing in the hall;—dancing with the first who had courage to ask her. Go, and give her my message."

"Let some worthier messenger carry it. I am too humble, my lady."

"You are the fittest, because I doubt whether there is another yeoman on the ground whose speech she would understand. You must have been brought up outside of Derbyshire; for you have not the country speech which, in another, would be to her like a foreign tongue."

This remark dispatched him on his errand. The Countess turned to Gadbury, laughing, and said she had never seen his eyes so far out of his head; and his countenance was full of astonishment when he replied that he had never seen such a likeness in his life.

"Study him, and tell me whether it be only a likeness," said the Countess. "Is that clumsiness, that sheepish air, real, do you think? or rather the air, (see now!) with which he approaches her Grace? Does a yeoman attain such a bearing in a moment, on merely facing royalty?"

"A courtly air indeed!" exclaimed Gadbury.

"His mask, if it be a mask—"

"No doubt of that, Gadbury."

"His mask falls at her glance."

"It is either flattery or rank imprudence," the Countess observed. "See how her Grace bends to him as he kneels, and frowns! She frowns on his rashness; but how plain is the smile underneath it!"

"But what brings the Duke of Norfolk here in that guise?" asked Gadbury.

"Wooers are full of strange devices," said the Countess.

"But, after all the sanction given to her Grace wedding an English nobleman," observed Gadbury; "after our queen's own proposal of the Earl of Leicester—"

"The Earl of Leicester is not the Duke of Norfolk. That is one thing; and another is that Queen Bess may not be so ready as she was a year ago to further any marriage of her kinswoman. It is said that Bothwell is ascertained to be still living; and he may be produced if any one of her Grace's flirtations should go too far. Look at them now!"

"They are a noble pair!" exclaimed Gadbury.

"But slow in giving and receiving a message," said the Countess. "I believe I must send another of her Grace's lovers to fetch her reply. There is Felton—No, there is no need. Our highbred yeoman is returning. You see how his rustic manner grows upon him as he retires from Queen Mary to poor Bess of Hardwick!"

The yeoman brought word that her Grace feared that long disuse had spoiled her skill in archery, and that she should merely discredit Scotland if she accepted a challenge to the butts. She should have more pleasure in witnessing her hostess's noted excellence.

While the sport proceeded, Mary of Scotland missed no point of the contest, but remarked on every shot. Yet she carried on a conversation with Felton, who kneeled by her side.

"If you have tidings for me," she said, "use these few moments with diligence. Why so silent, with so rare an opportunity for private speech?" And she cast on him a glance which roused his spirits.

"I entreat your majesty's pardon," said Felton. "I must indeed rally my wits which yonder yeoman had cruelly dispersed."

"Forget yonder yeoman," said she, smiling: "except, indeed, that we must admire that shot of his. If he wins the prize, we shall have him here again to receive his honours."

Felton inwardly breathed a hope that Bess might be the winner.

"Your tidings, quickly, if you have any," her Grace demanded.

"All was prospering, up to forty-eight hours since," said Felton. "The force from Jedburgh has already joined the Percy's troops; and Westmoreland will meet them on the frontier of Yorkshire. My comrade will remain here to receive such news as may arrive, while I ride towards Westmoreland, to ensure the junction which is planned for Thursday night. Or he will ride, and I shall remain."

"Which?" asked her Grace, smiling.

Felton was eagerly rising when she cautioned him to show no emotion.

"If you cannot proceed till I have answered my own question," she continued, "I should propose that you should remain, as a nearer friend of mine: that is, supposing that the errand to the Earl of Westmoreland is one which requires no singular skill,—one to which your friend's ability is adequate."

"Stansbury is equal to either business," Felton declared.

"And well disposed? You know I trust him on your assurance."

"Only too well disposed. Your Majesty will not be offended at this chance word when I explain that it is because we are inseparable in our undertakings that he is now concerned with me in this. His homage to your Majesty is hourly becoming all that——"

"Not all that yours is, I trust," Mary said, kindly. "I would not have more noble-hearted gentlemen involved. Alas! we have forgotten our part! What is that cheer?"

"An excellent shot that—of Bess of Hardwick's!" said one of the party who stood sentinel while the low-voiced conversation went on.

"Persuade her to show us another," said Felton to him; "we must have a few more moments."

Turning to Mary, he perceived that she was contemplating Stansbury. She sighed, and said that there must be success this time, for it would destroy her peace for ever if she involved in danger

any brave gentleman through loyalty to his friend. It was enough, and too much, when the peril reached only her own near and dear friends.

"Your Majesty has no real fear," Felton observed.

"I know only what I am told," she replied, gently. "Why do you say this? If I am too bold, too little careful of my comrades in our cause, you must warn me. Is the danger greater . . .?"

"The danger is naught, madam. It is only when I think of Stansbury that it flits for a moment before my fancy."

"And why then?"

"Because he is a man of a childlike mind, manly as he is in thought and temper. He is not made for political adventure in a time like ours."

"He ought to have had no share in it," Mary observed.

And Felton hastened to explain that he had striven against his friend's sympathy till he found it was a better kindness to admit him to confidence than to separate from him. But there must be, there could be, no failure.

"Why did you say just now that I myself have no fear?" Mary again asked.

Felton bitterly repented the remark; but her Grace would have an answer. He could not meet her eye as he said that he judged by the satisfaction she showed when his Grace of Norfolk was at her feet, half-an-hour ago.

"You recognised him, then?" said she. "I feared so. It was over rash in him to appear so far from York, where also he will be missed, and your well-served Sovereign will hear of it. It is too idle of him; and you are mistaken, Mr. Felton, if you imagine that such rashness affords me any pleasure. I did indeed rebuke him."

Felton smiled painfully at the remembrance of the rebuke, which was nothing but a tender reproach for running risks for her sake,—given with the blush and the tone which intoxicated eye and ear, and the self which lay behind them. Felton thought that he would break into every prison to which Mary could be consigned to obtain such a rebuke as was now making yonder marksman in homespun the happiest man in Derbyshire. The more pointedly did he say that his Grace of Norfolk had not made this journey without reason. He had brought news, as her Grace would soon no doubt learn. Mary's eagerness was extreme to hear this news; but Felton could only endeavour to bring the Duke to speech with her Grace. He did not know the nature of the tidings, further than that they bore favourably on the scheme of a rising and rescue a few days hence.

Mary had no more attention for Felton now, except as far as kindness required. She was watching the shooting. She had not long to wait. The yeoman in homespun won the prize, which was a handsome tankard. The second prize, a prodigious cheese, fell to the Countess. The yeoman appeared before Mary, to receive her compliments, and he laid his tankard at her feet.

"What will you do with your prize?" she

asked. "Have you a buffet at home worthy to exhibit such a trophy?"

"I have a trifle of grandmother's plate," he replied; "a few poor spoons, and an empty place for my prize. I, and all mine, shall have the honour of drinking your Grace's health,"—and, lowering his voice, he proceeded,—"the health of all your Majesty's devoted servants, and especially your Majesty's earliest subjects. . . ."

A glance showed that Mary understood that he was giving her news from France.

"Who," continued the prizeman, "will line our cliffs some night soon."

There was no time for more. The Countess was approaching amidst laughter and shouts of "Well done, Bess of Hardwick!" She was bearing her great cheese on her head, not altogether without grace, and with extreme good humour; and she lowered it to her Grace's feet, with a hope that her Grace would permit the Derbyshire people to think of her as tasting the genuine cheese of their county at supper, this evening or some other. Her Grace would not wait for supper-time. If there was bread anywhere on the ground . . . She delighted the people further by declining the delicate manchet, and even the meal loaf, and preferring the oat-cake, which she said she had learned in Scotland to like: but so few were the morsels of cake and cheese that she swallowed, that Felton, and not Felton alone, believed that the whole play was for the sake of pledging the prizeman in a draught from his tankard. She had called for ale; but she found herself served with a choice French wine.

It was but a lady's portion that she took; but the country people might have been excused for supposing it more, from the flush on her cheek, the gaiety of her voice, and the exhilaration of her whole bearing. She asked questions of the old labourers and their dames, which had to be translated from her slightly foreign English into their dialect before any sort of answer could be got. She made the boys run races; and she noticed the infants,—less gaily, it is true, and once with tearful eyes; but she so far pleased young as well as old, that when the infants grew up to be youths and maidens, they listened eagerly to all conjectures about what would be the end of the long captivity of that beautiful lady. How kindly she had smiled at them! but now, it was said, she never smiled. How lightly she had mounted, and ridden up the valley when the games were over that fair-day! yet now she never appeared outside the walls of Fotheringay Castle. Did she remember that fair-day at Chee Tor, and having patted the cheeks of any baby there? Yes: Mary had reason to remember that day.

She believed that night, and she probably believed to the end of her days, that her hostess knew what to expect on the return of the party: but in this she was mistaken. The country people would not have been allowed to come near her, if it had been suspected that there would be any rousing of the neighbourhood before sunset.

The Countess saw the prizeman take his leave with a rustic bow, and mount a clumsy hack to ride home, as he said: but, as she herself rode behind her guest, she looked back, and saw that

he had dismounted just below the ridge, and was watching the group, shading his eyes with his hat. It was true, as she observed to Gadbury, that any yeoman might watch a queen on her way, when he might never see a queen again: but still, his attitude was not that of a man with a good wife at home, to whom he was anxious to show his prize. She should inform Lord Shrewsbury, every time she saw the Duke of Norfolk in attendance; and the Earl would give what information he thought fit to his own sovereign. Her own opinion was that, as her Grace had a train of admirers awaiting her wherever she went, she was insufficiently guarded. Gadbury counted numbers, and observed that there were twenty-two men now present to guard four ladies. The Countess would not be reckoned as a lady requiring guardianship, but rather as one of her Grace's men-at-arms; and she showed that she carried weapons. She said, too, that where the roads were thronged with the country people, as on that day, all was safe enough: but she fancied that the hunting and hawking, in the woods and on the moors, had gone too far; and that the slippery lady would be missing, some day, when it was time to be going home.

At the same moment, the whole cavalcade seemed to be struck by the appearance of a company of horsemen who crossed the ridge, at some distance to the east of the road. It was a large party,—not less than thirty, the architect judged. The strangeness was in any party coming in that direction after the fair was over. The Countess was instantly persuaded that a rescue was intended. She issued rapid orders to her servants and squires, bidding them push on with all speed on their road home; and she would overtake them presently. Selecting one servant to follow her, she took the left hand road, as soon as the other ladies had passed its opening, and rode full speed at the approaching company, as if she meant to charge them all at once.

The strangers halted for a moment; and then all but two cut across the moorland, through wet and dry, bog and stones, and succeeded in heading the group below. Of the two who detached themselves one awaited the Countess, hat in hand, and declared himself her Ladyship's humble servant. He had been deputed by Sir Francis Knollys—

"Then it is not a rescue! thank Heaven!" exclaimed the Countess.

"Far from it," the stranger declared. "Indeed it was precisely the contrary. It was an arrest."

"It must be a mistake," the Countess replied. Sir Francis Knollys was merely to fulfil Lord Shrewsbury's office while he was ill. That had been all settled between the Queen's council and Lord Shrewsbury.

The stranger bowed, evidently unconvinced; and the state of things, when the Lady Bess overtook her party, was certainly surprising enough. The loudest voice she heard was that of Mary of Scotland. She was in vehement anger; and her ladies were in tears. Sir Francis Knollys held her rein, and led her horse forward, while Felton, Stansbury, and their servants offered defiance to all persons who should conduct her Grace anywhere but where she was pleased to go. Mary

asked where Sir Francis meant to take her ; and when he said that she was not to return to Buxton, but to go to a country house for the present, and then to Tutbury, she wept aloud, and appealed to the people within hearing for aid. Felton's anguish was in vain : the countryfolk crowded together, and seemed mortally afraid of the well-armed gentlemen, who announced to them that there was treason afoot against Queen Elizabeth. There was nothing to be done for Mary. At the next turn, the Buxton road was quitted,—even by Bess of Hardwick herself. She would not lose sight of her charge. The Earl must recover as well as he could without her. She must learn what all this meant, and be ready to answer to the Queen—

“ Yes, indeed ! ” one of Sir F. Knollys' gentlemen observed in her ear. “ It was quite time to do so when, but for an accident, the Queen of Scots would have escaped in the course of a week, and the English crown would have been again in danger. A conspiracy was suspected : her Grace of Scotland's secretaries were doubted, and it was necessary to separate her Grace from them till her papers had been examined. It was a sudden thought,—this start this afternoon ; and it was not settled, he believed, where the night should be passed ; but it would certainly not be at Buxton.”

Felton prevailed to have the poor queen conveyed once more to his house, near Chesterfield. She was dissolved in tears as she dismounted at his door ; and in the hall she flung herself into a chair sobbing out :

“ Here again ! Disappointed again ! Going again to Tutbury ! O ! anywhere but Tutbury ! If you knew,”—and she turned to Knollys, “ what I have endured of indignity and misery of every kind at Tutbury, you would spare me from going there.”

Sir F. Knollys was concerned that her Grace had so strong a dislike to Tutbury, as it was his charge to convey her there.

She sprang from her seat, dashed away her tears, and demanded to be conducted to her chamber. For three days and nights, her host watched for a moment's sight of her ; but in vain. A sentinel was placed at her door ; and no one but her ladies saw her till a messenger brought the news that the coast was now clear at Tutbury.

(To be continued.)

THE ANGLERS OF THE DOVE.

BY HARRIET MARTINEAU.



CHAPTER VII.—A HARVEST EVENING AT TUTBURY.

It was a glorious harvest day in Farmer Chell's fields, but dreary and darksome in the house, when Polly sat there, with no companion but the little dying brother who lay across her lap. The whole household, except these two, were in the field. The farmer had summoned all hands, to make the best use of the fine weather; and there they were, in the sunshine and the shade, reaping, binding, singing, resting, drinking ale and cracking jokes, while Polly had darkened the window, and was moistening the child's lips, and wishing that somebody would come to the door. Her mother had thought the child was worse; but all the rest had said that these kind of cases went on without end; and she might as well say he would die next Martinmas as to-day. Since the morning, however, there had been a change; and Polly perceived that he could not live to see his parents again. She once went as far as the door, to look out for the chance of some one being within sight; but the slightest movement so distressed the child that she returned to her low seat, and remained motionless till he had breathed his last sigh, with his head on her shoulder.

She was full of awe. She had seen more than one person die; but she had never before been alone with death. The hour was too solemn for

tears. She laid him down on his little bed, closed his eyes, crossed his thin hands upon his breast, and stood looking at him, thinking of the first time she saw him, when he was only a few hours old, and of the plaything he was as an infant, and of the growth of her love for him since, and of the relief it would be to that love for him that he would now suffer no more. She was startled from her reverie by a touch on the shoulder. Two of her village acquaintances, Dolly and Cicely, the silk knitters, who could carry their work about with them, and knit as they went, and who were apt to infest their friends' houses as persons of other trades could not, had entered unheard. They were full of excitement. The Queen of Scots was coming back,—coming to the Castle that very night,—some said within an hour,—some said at any minute now. Polly must come and see the sight.

When she turned, her countenance startled them. She pointed to the little corpse. The intruders cast a scared glance at each other, and rushed out of the house without waiting for a word. They ran till stopped by want of breath: and when each asked the other why she was so frightened, neither could very well say. It was so strange,—that moody girl all alone with the dead child—standing staring at him, and with no

tear in her eye, and not a word to say! What was she doing? At first they said she was doing nothing: but then they could not be sure she was doing nothing; and by degrees they were certain that she was making signs with her hands, and muttering with her lips. It must have been a warning within them of something wrong which made them run as they did. Should they go to the field, and tell the farmer and his wife? or should they run to the Minister, and let him know what things were doing? As they did not wish to miss seeing the Castle procession pass, they decided on keeping watch on the path to Farmer Chell's—listening towards the road, and spying towards the house. They did not watch in vain. Sampson came from the paddock, leaped the fence, and entered the house.

Polly had made several discoveries about Sampson since they were married, two months ago: but she was surprised now, when she thought nothing about him could surprise her again, at his carelessness about the position in which he found her. She believed he would mourn the little brother as a brother should; she believed he would sorrow with her, and minister to her mother: but at this moment he could think of nothing but the expected arrival at the Castle.

"Everything has come upon us at once," he said. "There is news which her Grace must hear: there will be gentry wanting secret speech with the Castle; and I may be sent to London, or to York, or Hartlepool, at any moment."

"To Hartlepool! Where is that?"

"Ay! I see I must trust you with more than you think for. I believe you are a good Catholic now, Polly;—such a Catholic as may be trusted in the greatest cause that ever stirred the world."

"I am sorry for the rightful Queen; and I would do anything to save her from the proud usurper in London there, who persecutes us all,—Catholics and true Protestants."

"True Protestants, Polly! How can Protestants be true?"

"Well; you know what I mean:—the people who follow Dr. Pantlin, and believe as I believed not long ago; and you too, Sampson."

"No; that is a mistake, Polly; and I must make you understand about it now. I was under religious orders when I seemed to be a Protestant. Many are so: and there is reason for it. You are sorry for this oppressed Queen; and you abhor her bastard kinswoman—"

Polly started, and looked round.

"Nobody hears;" and as they at the same moment looked at the little white face before them, Sampson's voice trembled, and the tears at last sprang to Polly's eyes.

"He will never hear us more!" she sobbed.

"Listen, Polly," said her husband, "for there may be no time to lose. The quarrel of these queens is but a small matter, though the whole world is talking of it. As a woman's quarrel it is nothing; as a strife for a coat-of-arms, or a royal succession, or even a present throne, it is no such great matter. There have been such quarrels before in every country. It is because the salvation of the whole world depends on the fate of

these kinswomen that the times are such as men have never seen before."

"I do not understand all these things," said Polly: "but Father Berthon says I have only to obey the Church through him, and I shall know all that is necessary. I do not want to know any more: for it is difficult enough now, living in the same house, and with the same people, when all is really so different from former days. Sampson, I do wish we could have a home of our own!"

"We will, child, as soon as we can with any safety: but you must hear me now. 'The fate of all mankind hangs,' Father Berthon says, 'on the fate of these two Queens.' If the heretic prevails—But we need not think of that; for her doom is certain. When Queen Mary rides into London to be crowned, perhaps by the Pope himself, the Church will be safe, and the happy old times will have come back again."

"Will that ever be?"

"Yes, it will."

"And what will the Protestants do?"

"There will be none. There must be an end of them by that time."

"O, Sampson, how?"

"Most of them will return to the Church; and those who will not must take the consequences. Think of the great Princes who are banded together! When we hear of this poor Queen of Scots being forlorn and weak in the hands of her proud kinswoman, we must remember that it is Elizabeth who is forlorn and weak. Except the traders in the Low Countries, she has few friends; and she will have fewer before another year; for the Pope's ban will come out by Christmas, they say. Queen Mary has the French Court with her, and nearly all France; and the great great sovereign—"

"The Pope?"

"The Pope, of course; but the great, rich, pious, powerful prince—"

"Philip of Spain, you mean. But is he not cruel? And does not he talk sometimes of invading us?"

"Hush!" said Sampson, afraid that his own ears should hear such words. "Not us! He may, and France may, invade England; but not you and me. All good Catholics will be safe. Now, this brings me to what you must hear,—somewhat sooner than I intended. I will show you how safe you and I shall be whenever the Catholics come. Look here!"

And Sampson drew from a concealed pocket in his dress a small leather case, in which there was a silver medal, like some which were given as prizes to improvers of the arts of manufacture on the Continent. It would be supposed by a stranger that Sampson had been distinguished as a silk-weaver; and Polly now asked why she had never seen this medal before. Sampson, however, showed her the reason why. The medal could be opened; and fixed within it was a slip of parchment, exhibiting a device in colours known to every priest, and to all orthodox political leaders of the time.

"It is my master's device and signature," whispered Sampson. "Yes, the great Philip of Spain is my master. I am here as his servant."

"Do you mean as his spy?"

"Yes;" Sampson replied stoutly: "and from this time you must be his servant, too. There are several of us in England always: always one at least where there are Brabant, or Swiss, or French silk-weavers and knitters: and there will be always one or more wherever this poor Queen is detained."

"Does she know this?"

"She does: but she has, in every new place, to learn to whom to trust. You must get into her presence—"

"I cannot, Sampson! I never can. How should I be ever face to face with a Queen in a castle?"

"Perhaps it may be in this wood: but I will see to that. Wherever it is, you will have to catch her eye with that device within the medal.—'When?' Some day very soon."

"You must not leave the medal with me meantime, Sampson. I cannot undertake the charge."

"You must. You may be sent for when I am absent. Moreover, there will be strangers in the neighbourhood, now that the Queen has returned; and, perhaps, one or two may be lodged in this house; and you may have to show some one of them that you are to be trusted."

"Not in my father's house," Polly declared.

"Not while my poor mother is mourning this child. I have yielded much to you, Sampson. I have got bewildered,—I fear I might say lost,—among you and your friends—"

"Not lost, but saved, as you will find when the French and the Spaniards come."

"But I will not plot about Popes and Queens under my father's roof. Our own little affairs,—a village girl marrying one lover or another, and being married by priest or parson, secretly or openly,—all that is one thing; and plots which might bring my father to prison, or the gallows, are another. I cannot keep the medal here."

The creak of the harvest waggon in the lane,—a sound so joyous in former years,—now struck upon her heart. Her parents must be coming home. As they arrived at the door, Sampson carried his point about the medal. He departed by the other door, pointing to the case as it lay on the child's bed. Polly had but just time to hide it in her dress.

It was a dreary evening. The mother said incessantly that she should never forgive herself for going out that day. In the unreasonableness of grief, she said that perhaps her child would not have died if she had been beside him; and the farmer moodily observed that he was of that opinion too. Polly explained how there was nothing to be done; how lonely she had felt, and yet how certain that the child's last hour had come: and she wept bitterly over the hardship of being made, in a manner, finally answerable for the death of the child who had been kept alive so long at least as much by her tender nursing as by her mother's. She supposed it was the effect of a new grief upon a stern man, which made her father what he was that night, and afterwards. He scarcely spoke: he would receive nothing from her hand, he seemed to fear,—perhaps to hate her. She wondered whether he could have been made suspicious of her secret

marriage. She thought not, as his manner was not that of an angry man: but, whenever the priest should give her leave to tell, she hardly thought she dared do it, if her father continued to watch her as he did. He would not say a word of what he intended to do about burying his child,—the supreme difficulty in the day of the dispersion of the clergy. There lay the little body, at first on its bed, and then in a rude coffin made in the woodcutter's shed; and even the mother did not know where it was to be put underground. Her husband had muttered that it was enough that his child had been bewitched in its lifetime: it should have a safe sleep now, and an easy grave.

The village gossips had much to say that summer night, for her Grace had returned to the Castle. It seemed like a sudden return; for strange men had been up at the Castle two days before, very busy among the furniture of her Grace's apartments; so that it was supposed that everything was to be new hung and beautified before her return: yet here she was, before the rooms could have been even put in proper order.

She was more stately and graceful than ever. So the gentlemen in her train agreed; and such was the feeling of the country people, however they might express it. Seeing her ride by, with her grave countenance, her courteous greeting to the people, and her dignified manner to her own servants, the by-standers could not have believed, if they had been told, that she had given way to passion so lately, and had even appealed to the wayside crowd for rescue.

The Countess had hastened forwards within the last hour, and was now awaiting her guest at the great entrance. She made, with some carelessness, the requisite apology for the Earl's absence, and the introduction of Sir Francis Knollys as his temporary substitute: and she was not sorry to be dismissed from attendance at the door of Mary's apartments. She had had too little time for effacing the signs of the handiwork of the messengers from London, and she did not desire to witness her Grace's indignation on finding how her desks and cabinets had been dealt with. If the Lady Bess had entered, she would have found that some diligent hands had restored the disorder which she had partly retrieved. The apartment had the air of having been rifled the night before. As Mary glanced round from open drawer to door ajar, she lifted her hands piteously, and sank on the nearest couch. It might seem strange that she could at such a moment admit a servant to report of garments and hangings: but the gay needleman of her suite desired admittance, and at once obtained it.

"Your Grace must take heart," he said, smiling. "There is no harm done."

"How is that possible? Tell me in a word how great the misfortune is."

"There is no misfortune, madam. I must speak, as you say, in one word; and that word is that all is safe."

"My papers safe?"

"They are—safely burned two days ago. If your Grace has heard," he continued, smiling, "of any seizure of papers, that is true also. What

those papers were that were seized is another question."

"But my friends—the friends in the north, and—Norfolk?"

"All secure as yet. Nay, I assure your Grace I speak only what I know. The Duke of Norfolk is travelling to court, where he has been invited to dine with the Queen. We know his Grace well enough to understand how he will profit by the occasion."

"I trust so," answered Mary, with a sigh of relief. "But is it possible—can such a thing befall me as that none of my friends have suffered? De Naou? Curle? Were they not arrested?"

"Your Grace's secretaries were both arrested: but that event had been provided for. Nothing was under their charge which could imperil them; and nothing within their knowledge which could compromise your Grace."

"It is a boon from Heaven to have such a friend as you," said Mary, her eyes filling with tears. "But I must take the warning of this event, and resign myself to my fate without further struggle."

"My counsel, if permitted," said the disguised priest, cheerfully, "is that your Grace should first resign yourself to sleep. That is the duty of this night. What to do and dare hereafter, we shall see hereafter."

He proceeded to take his leave; but had to answer one or two more questions. He related that he was still consulted by the hostess as a spy on her Grace. He had established a channel of communication for letters from abroad; and any person who, appearing in any capacity before her Grace, should exhibit the signature of his Majesty of Spain, might be charged with letters as a safe post. The Earl would return as soon as he could by any means bear the journey; and his return would be very welcome. Her Grace's devoted friends would meantime remain at hand, to protect her as far as possible from the insolence of Sir Francis Knollys. In short, her Grace's position was in no respect worse than when she left Tutbury; but rather it was better, inasmuch as seizures had been made without result.

"What say the country folk?" asked Mary. "I fear these alarms making them spies upon my friends. What say they to these alarms?"

"Your Grace must not be displeased at the answer to that question," replied the priest. "They say that it is by witchcraft that your Grace holds fast all eyes and all hearts. They are a wonderfully superstitious people, now that they have lost the true faith; and they will no more meddle with your Grace's affairs than they would rummage the papers and implements of the Wise Man who lives in the wood yonder. I entreat you, madam, to take heart when all is so well."

"I will," said Mary; "and I will not forget whose voice gave me this comfort. May you have such peace as you have given to me!"

It rather startled the priest to see, half an hour later, her Grace and the Ladies Hamilton and Douglass walking on the terrace by moonlight, and to catch the tones even of mirth as they walked; but he said to himself that it was a natural revulsion from the terror of the last three days.

"See her," whispered a voice on the river bank

below. "By the faintest blink of moonlight, one would know her from every other. But one thirsts the more for her voice. If one could scale the height there, and nestle under the wall—"

"Felton, you are mad," said Stansbury, laughing. "A Bedlamite would not think of scaling that rock."

"That may be a mistake," said Felton, quietly. "However, the sight we see is enough for this night. What a queenly heart and courage she has, —to leave her chamber, and taste the summer night, after passing through the fiery furnace of the last three days."

"Possibly she has good news of the Duke," Stansbury suggested, and to this his comrade made no reply.

CHAPTER VIII. POLLY BEGINS TO KNOW THE WORLD.

As the autumn advanced, the Earl of Shrewsbury recovered his health. He would have returned to Tutbury much sooner if either he could or his wife could not have been present with his charge. Her daily messengers kept up his fever beyond its necessary term; for they brought letters detailing harshnesses and indignities inflicted on the captive Queen, which the Earl felt as a sort of disgrace to his own honour. Before his physician would declare him able to travel, he was on his way to Tutbury; and within twenty-four hours of his arrival, Sir Francis Knollys was gone.

The Earl had heard and seen enough in passing through the forest and village to be satisfied that there was something wrong among the people. His lady could only say that that was a matter of course wherever the Queen of Scots inflicted her malignant presence. More definite information than this being needed, the Earl's gentlemen were sent down to learn what they could of the state of affairs in the village and the country round. Meantime, one of the servants made known that there was a young woman then at the gate,—sent for about some silk nets for her Grace's ladies,—a girl likely to know what the people were thinking and saying: and in a trice Polly found herself, to her great consternation, in the presence of the Earl and Countess, instead of her patron, the needleman.

"I know you, girl," said the Countess. "You are the daughter of the yeoman at the edge of the forest."

Polly curtsayed.

"Are you married?" asked Bess, in her blunt way.

"Perhaps going to be," the Earl observed, seeing Polly's confusion.

"What I am thinking of," said the Countess, "is that somebody said, after that youth—that artisan from Switzerland—came here, that he was going to marry you: and if that did not happen to be true, the youth might serve, as he is said to be educated, to send to the university for a year, to qualify for our church here. It is a serious thing the church being closed so long. I believe it to be at the bottom of the discontent that we hear of below. The bishop says we may not reckon on any pastor from him; for half the pulpits are empty. If this youth—I forget his name—"

"Sampson Rudd."

"If Sampson Rudd is married, or likely to be, the thing cannot be done, because the Queen does not approve of a married clergy."

"She would allow a married priest rather than none," the Earl observed.

"Perhaps so; but in this place it is necessary to be very careful in the choice of a preacher, as long as the papists throng hither as they do. As the young woman seems unwilling to speak," the Countess observed to her husband, "I suppose Sampson Rudd is not one to answer our purpose."

Polly admitted that Sampson certainly intended not to be a bachelor; and then she was glad of a subject to speak on. She told of her little brother's coffin, covered over in the garden, for want of a priest to bury it; and she could answer any questions about the itinerant preachers who appeared every few weeks; and especially Dr. Pantlin, the old favourite over the whole country side, who preached in the wood, or among the rocks on the moor, while the cobwebs thickened upon the church-door. Further than this, Polly gave no definite information. The people were in an uncertain temper, no doubt. Some of them believed something was going to happen. The thunderstorms had been so awful this summer,—that was one thing; and there were reports of great dangers to the Queen and the Church. Which Church?—Why, for that matter, there was talk about both: but the new people from abroad, the silk manufacturers, were afraid of the same thing happening again that had happened before,—that their relations would be murdered by the Romanists.

"Where?" the Earl inquired.

"Wherever they may be, my Lord. Some in Switzerland, where Sampson lived so long; and more in the Low Countries and in France; and some say here,—in London, and as far as Tutbury itself."

"You do not believe that," said the Earl, smiling. "You do not expect to have your throat cut by any Frenchman or Spaniard?"

How should she know what to expect? Polly asked. It was said that persons much wiser than herself were very uncertain. It was said that her Majesty herself had told her greatest lords that she was so surrounded by plots that she did not know which way to turn: and if the Queen felt so, with all her guards about her, poor people down in the country, who were ordered about, two or three different ways, about their religion, and always threatened by somebody, might well be troubled in mind, and somewhat out of temper. This seemed to the Earl very reasonable; and he said so, adding that all good subjects might comfort themselves, as the Queen certainly did, with the certainty that no foreigners would be allowed to do any harm to Queen or people. Englishmen of all religions, as well as of all ranks and fortunes, would join with one heart and one soul to beat off any invader who should attempt mischief here. With this piece of comfort, Polly was dismissed, to receive her orders from the tailor.

Steps must be taken to open the church, the Earl said. And there must be some further discouragement of strangers; too many of whom came, and held intercourse with the residents. "If you believe," said the Earl, "that all those

gentry that I see are here to fish and sport in the forest, you are more easy of belief than I am."

"Nobody sees so much of them as the tailor," the Countess said: "his affairs bring him into intercourse with the people every day of the week; and he is my chief authority."

"And you think him thoroughly trustworthy,—sure to be right?"

"He certainly is. He knows this false woman within there in spite of her winning airs. He has said enough to me, many a time, to prove that she does not captivate quite everybody."

"How happens it that he is still in her service? Women are sharp enough in discovering whether they are liked or despised by those about them."

"He is sufficiently obsequious—"

"To her or to you, Bess? He deceives one or the other of you."

"I will prove to you what his disposition is," the Countess said. "He hears a great deal of news,—tailors are like barbers for that,—and one of his late anecdotes is this. He says the Duke of Norfolk was sent to London to dine with the Queen, at the time of our alarm. Yes,—everybody knows that; but see the spirit of what follows. Upon the Queen warning him, in a significant way, to lay his head on no unsafe pillow, he readily fell into discourse with her Majesty about the Queen of Scots, calling this fair lady here a murderess, and an adulteress, and a pretender. He said he had nothing to desire beyond what his Sovereign had enriched him with; and that he was more of a prince in his own bowling-alley at Norwich than her Grace of Scotland in her own kingdom. I doubted how this could be; but that is not the question."

"Norfolk explained at the moment," said the Earl, "that his revenues are larger than those of the kingdom of Scotland; and that his possessions were in his own hand, whereas those of the Queen's kinswoman were almost as visionary in Scotland as in England."

"Then the story is true?"

"It is; and it is known to many people."

"But this man would not have repeated it to me, you see, unless he was awake to the arts of the woman he measures in mind as well as in outward proportions."

The Earl was not so sure. His remark was:

"The man's telling you the story proves, not his opinion of the woman, but his knowledge of yours. He may be honest, however: I do not say he is not. But I shall not converse needlessly with him."

"And you will thereby lose many a useful hint," the wife declared. "Women make the best gaolers, after all."

That was a point which could not be settled at the moment. A more practical concern was one on which the Earl spoke with great decision. His guest must not be irritated and vexed by the presence of persons who were not agreeable to her. Sir Francis Knollys was gone: he should himself intrude as little as possible; and he could not see the necessity of any one but those invited by herself attending her in her walks and her retirement. The Countess shrugged her shoulders, declared she must keep the power of intrusion, as

a necessary safeguard, and received with infinite disgust her husband's commands to abstain from visiting her guest uninvited. To ascertain that her Grace was safe, morning and evening, was the Earl's own business : and more was not needed.

Meantime Polly, in another part of the Castle, had found her tongue. She had once little thought that she could speak in the presence of royalty as she was doing now.

She began her complaints to Father Berthon : but he presently bade her wait while he took her Grace's pleasure about the silk nets which occasioned Polly's visit. In a few moments he beckoned her to an inner apartment, and brought her and her wares into the presence of three ladies, one of whom was the Queen of Scots. He informed her Grace that the young woman had been devoted to her from the first moment she had seen her.

"And when was that?" Queen Mary asked.

"That winter evening, when the nobles and ladies came riding through the wood, and up to the Castle," Polly said, "and when the Queen herself looked—"

Polly stopped short.

"Looked like what?" asked the Queen, smiling.

"Like a vision of the twilight," Polly said, boldly, — "like a spirit, — like a downcast angel—"

"Enough, enough!" Queen Mary said,—not with any displeasure in her tone. "You are married to the young man Sampson?"

This time Polly made no evasions. Father Berthon had married her to Sampson; and it was as Sampson's wife that she came to speak now. She was bidden to speak; and she asked:

"Where is my husband? I am very unhappy; everything is going wrong; and I do not know where my husband is."

Father Berthon looked at the Queen, and received permission to speak at his discretion.

"Sampson is not far off," he said, "and you will see him soon. You shall be protected meantime. What is your trouble? Tell her Majesty what the people are saying and doing below."

"Let me hear it all," said Mary.

"First," said Polly, producing the medal-case, "I must entreat your Majesty or Father Berthon to take charge of this case and what is in it. Sampson compelled me to keep it, as my warrant if sent before your Majesty; and now it is not safe with me, day or night, and I get no rest."

The priest well knew the spring and the device. He handed it open to the Queen; and she forgot everything else in contemplating the device and signature of the deliverer from whom everything was expected, if England should fail to be restored to the true Church before Christmas. If France did not seat Mary in London as Queen of England within the next few weeks, Spain must take up the enterprise; and here, by the hands of a weaver's wife, arrived a token of Philip's good intentions. Such tokens were in the hands of high and low: Philip had spies and agents of all ranks and degrees; and no one of them ever offered his credentials to the gaze of the captive Queen without seeing her eyes fill with tears, and the pale cheeks flush with hope.

"This is indeed too precious to be put to risk," Mary observed, still contemplating the signature. "We will keep it safely for Sampson. We may promise that?" she inquired of Father Berthon.

"To keep it, or dispose of it safely," the priest declared. "But what is the special danger?" he inquired of Polly, as if he had not already heard.

"They have found out that I am married," said Polly; "and my father rages against me so that I am afraid for my life. His eye is never off me, and there is nothing that he does not say of me."

"What does he say?"

With a burst of tears, Polly told that her father charged her with having killed her little brother,—the little brother she was so fond of! "He must be mad," the priest observed; and Polly said he was like the rest,—all seemed mad together, except her mother and one or two more. Two girls, who happened to come in when the child had just died, were ready to swear that they caught Polly making magical signs over the body, and neither weeping nor making moan. It was most unfortunate that she was alone,—the whole household being out in the harvest-field, and nobody within call. Her father had taken advice, and she believed he would have her put in prison and charged with the murder; and she had dreaded being searched while she carried that token. The Queen inquired how long the child had been ill; and when she found the case was one of decline of many months, she cast up her eyes at the accusation of murder. Polly was eloquent on the madness, as well as the cruelty, of supposing that there was a woman in the world who could caress and tend a near relation,—one with whom she had been familiar, and whom she had ever loved,—and then murder him. As she spoke, a streak of paleness appeared round the beautiful mouth of the Queen, and spread and spread till Polly, in the midst of her excitement, observed it, and suddenly stopped. Father Berthon was frowning so that Polly's heart stood still. The Queen cleared her voice, and quietly observed that she did not understand this now. Why should the girl murder her brother?

"It is witchcraft, your Majesty, they say."

"Then they have discovered your return to the Church?"

"Yes; but that is not all. There is a general fear of something,—of the Devil's doings, to say the truth," said Polly. "They take one after another of us to be bewitched, till I do not know where they will stop."

"Do they think I am bewitched?" asked Mary.

"They think your Grace is the witch," Polly replied.

The priest and the ladies would have laughed, but that the Queen sighed, while she smiled.

"Do they take Father Berthon for a sorcerer?" she asked.

"No, madam; but they take another to be so. The Wise Man ought to have warning of what they may do. I would have tried to run through the wood to him, but I was so watched!"

"He shall have warning," said the priest, "though, if he is such a wise man, he should not need it. But what is their plot?"

"They will fire the four corners of his house while he is asleep. They say that every hair of his body, and every word of his books and writings, must be burnt. I was listening all last night. O, no! the Wise Man has not been bewitching me, nor anybody. Indeed, what he said to me was just warning me—"

She suddenly stopped, and no satisfactory account could be obtained from her of what he had warned her about. As his words now rushed back upon her mind she stood covered with confusion, and Father Berthon resolved that he must learn from her every syllable of the Wise Man's warnings.

"What others?" the Queen asked. "What do they say of Father Berthon?"

"They say he is the only bit of merry England that is left. He is as good as a barber for news, they say, besides being learned in the modes, as her Grace's needleman ought to be."

"And is that all?"

"Yes," said Polly; "and that is more praise than any one else gets. The gentlemen who come to sport give their money freely, but I doubt their being welcome. Some think they are foreign papists sent—"

"What! Felton and Stansbury!" exclaimed Father Berthon. "They speak good Derbyshire English, if anybody does."

"Yes; and they are among the bewitched."

Again there would have been a smile, but for the Queen's extreme gravity. Polly went on:

"There is more said about their being—what they should not—than about others: and it is certain that people have reason to give for it. Three persons at one time—Martin, and Nancy Sporle, and Geoffrey Clippesby—saw Mr. Felton up high on the rock, between the great rowan and the terrace wall, where it is steepest. Now, that is a place where nobody ever yet climbed, or can climb, because it is upright and smooth as a wall. They say the Devil, who can carry one up to a pinnacle of the Temple, set him there, and brought him down again: and they believe it the more because Mr. Stansbury pretended to be only fishing, and not to see Mr. Felton at all, when he had certainly been watching him the minute before."

"You shall show me the place from the terrace," Father Berthon told Polly.

Being pressed to say what she dreaded,—what she thought would happen,—Polly could only declare that all was at sixes and sevens; or, perhaps, it seemed so to her, because she was confused and dizzy from fear and want of sleep. She believed her father would send her to gaol, and that the Wise Man's house would be burnt; and that the visitors in the neighbourhood might at any moment be mobbed and stoned as papists and foreign enemies. Some persons expected an invasion of the kingdom, and that Queen Bess would be deposed; and many talked of a general slaughter of the Protestants; or, at any rate, of the Calvinists. Nobody seemed to think that Old England would ever be Merry England again.

The tears sprang as Polly said this. The priest patted her on the shoulder, and bade her hope better things. Mary observed, with a look of kind compassion, that the poor thing had been hardly dealt with, by her husband having been

sent away without any reference to his young wife's feelings. If it was really known that Polly had returned to the old faith, the Castle was the proper place for her; and she commanded Polly to remain, and consider herself in the service of the Queen of Scots. Having found Polly willing to take the vows of service, the Queen went on to console her with some wonderful words. She said, while the priest looked upon the ground, as if in some doubt of the prudence of her so speaking :

"Those are not far wrong, my child, who expect changes soon. Old England is going to be Merry England again, under a sovereign who will restore the ancient faith, and put an end to all the religious quarrels which make men so rude and unhappy. If you will stay with me, and if Sampson brings us such news as he will in all likelihood be charged with, you will not repent having married him, nor having made friends of us. You shall go to rest this night, free from fear of any worse prison than your mistress inhabits. We shall all be free and happy soon."

"And I, for my part," said the priest, "will keep watch over yonder Wise Man's house. I know where to look in the wood for the blaze, if they were to put the torch to his house :—we can see it from the terrace. But we will keep a better watch than that. The house shall not be attacked."

Polly curtsied low at each promise of relief; and then she was taken to the terrace, to show Father Berthon the spot where Mr. Felton was seen, perched there by the Powers of Evil.

(To be concluded in our next.)

THE ANGLERS OF THE DOVE.

BY HARRIET MARTINEAU.



CHAPTER IX. THE GREAT AUTUMN AT TUTBURY.

A SUNDAY like the good old Sundays came round at last. The church-bell rang for service; and all day there were throngs in the churchyard. The burials, baptisms, and marriages of several months were to be got through during that day and the next; and the clergyman had his hands so full that Dr. Pantlin appeared,—to help his brother-minister, as he grimly said. If the one administered the sacraments, the other should undertake the preaching; and Dr. Pantlin accordingly caused it to be known that he should hold a meeting in the meadow by the river-side.

There were windows in the Castle which overlooked that meadow; and at one of those windows stood Father Berthon with his glass; and there, presently, stood Polly also, being sent for to look through the glass, and say who was who, and what was being done.

That was Dr. Pantlin holding forth from his stand on the grey rock. There were few of the

village people there,—fewer than there used to be on the coldest days of winter; but the church bell accounted for that. Her own parents must be at church; for they were not here: yet they had never thought to miss a discourse of Dr. Pantlin's. There was a man on horseback; he would not carry away much, if his horse would not stand better. Ah! he had dismounted, and let his horse graze while he listened, holding the bridle the while. That group of women came from the hamlet over the hill yonder; they did not belong to the place. There seemed to be scarcely anybody that did belong to the place. All the men at least were strangers, or nearly so. The two gentlemen with their rods were not exactly strangers,—Mr. Stansbury and Mr. Felton.

"Are they there? Let me see them," said Father Berthon. "Are you certain?"

"Quite. You may catch them now, coming from behind those alders. You see their rods? What everlasting anglers they are! Sundays and all days!"

"Yes, they are diligent in their pleasures. Do they catch any fish, Polly?"

"Her Grace knows that they do; and so does your reverence. There were trout of their catching, in the spring, in every house they entered. What other sport they may have, each neighbour guesses for himself. But see! they are not listening to the sermon; they are hastening away by the wood. The horseman is mounted, and off at a canter. The people are running over the meadow. What can be the matter?"

"Only the constables, probably. Let me look. Yes; it is so. Your preaching friend will have to go to prison,—as he deserves; and those who have listened to him will be fined. I doubt whether the people have gained much in liberty by the change of religions; and they have lost everything else for it. Wherever Queen Bess travels, she has her road cleared of sour religionists, as she has of deformed and leprous persons. Our Queen-mistress here is less impatient with such people than their own Protestant sovereign. She bore with their serenades of untunable psalms, under her windows at Holyrood, when the cathedral music of France was still sounding in her ears. But the Protestant Queen has all psalm-singers and image-breakers swept out of her path, as if they were so many papists. The Catholics in exile, or in hiding, and the Anabaptists in prison, and the Puritans under her royal displeasure, and put to flight in the meadows like sheep before strange dogs,—such is the religious liberty of England, when fallen away from Rome!"

"And she hates the foreign Protestants, it is said, while there are so few that she likes at home. She says the Netherlanders have corrupted her people, who were a sober people before, but have now learned to swill like Flemish hogs."

"The tone of English manners is low indeed," said the priest, "with a bastard sovereign on the throne, and the true Queen in prison; with the true priests in exile, and a bastard clergy in the pulpits, and wild heresy infesting the very woods and hills, and the broad meadows of the land. But a few days more, and we shall see better times."

"I wish Sampson would come home!" sighed Polly.

"He waits only to bring the news. Be patient, my child, for the sake of what he will bring. And now that yonder meadow is clear, go and see whether there are letters for the Queen."

Polly had for some days known the secret of the Queen's post-office,—the place in the terrace wall which a good climber could reach from below, by means of a hidden cord, and staples carefully inserted. There were no letters, though the Queen was singularly impatient for them. Time after time that day Polly was sent to look; and still there were none. Two persons below were equally eager to deposit something there. Felton and Stansbury had been to visit the Wise Man, on the dispersion of Dr. Pantlin's congregation, to warn him of danger. The general restlessness and alarm of the neighbourhood wanted an object; and such an object was always found in the nearest reputed witch or sorcerer. The Devil's

priest, and his retreat in the wood, had been in everybody's thoughts that day, after the warnings from both pulpits about the Devil's work that was going on in those parts. If there was hatred loudly expressed towards the dangerous woman up at the Castle, there was no less fear of the wizard in the forest. The good-natured gentlemen had put the Wise Man on his guard; and he, for his part, bade them beware of desperate perils hanging over their idol Princess, and all who worshipped her. Stansbury jeasted with him about his being no conjurer, for this time. He had seldom made so bad a guess; and Felton had hurried his indiscreet comrade away. The Wise Man stood looking after them till they were out of sight among the trees. Then he turned into his house with a sigh, saying to himself that it was not for him to admit trouble of mind about the turns of human fate: but he had not got over the weakness of mourning over the waste of such men as these. He should never see them more; and he dreaded what he might hear of them. He proceeded to gather up his papers, and his medicines, and his books, and to deposit them in a certain cupboard he had made long before in a hollow tree in the depth of the wood. Then he spread his board, and fed the fire, so that there was every appearance of his intending to return to the next meal; he dressed himself like a traveller, strapped his tabor and pipes on his shoulder, and started as an itinerant musician in the opposite direction from Tutbury. Comrades must be on the look-out for him on the Lichfield road; and they would set the people dancing in all the villages till the times should be more settled, and philosophers might be safe in their retreats again.

The next day the October sun rose clear; and the mellow sunshine rested on the variegated foliage of Needwood Forest, and made the meadows as green as May, and the waters of the Dove as clear as the morning air. Before Mary had left her bed, her ladies brought her what she longed for. It was but one letter; but it promised more. Polly had found it at dawn where at sunset there was nothing.

There was a radiant joy to-day in the face which had seemed more beautiful in its melancholy than any other: yet now it was plain that joy became it best. Her appetite at breakfast rejoiced her ladies; and her enjoyment of the sunshine on the terrace cheered her industrious needleman at his work, as her figure passed and repassed his window. As Polly stood aside at the stairfoot, with a low obeisance, her royal mistress stopped to whisper some words with a smile. She told Polly that somebody was coming to-day, and she had better look out for him from a certain window which commanded the road. With the light step of girlhood, she paced the gardens, and returned to the terrace, and then to the gardens again; and there she found the Earl,—all unconscious, as she supposed, of what was in her heart. He had indeed not heard, though the tidings were on the way, that at any moment now, Mary might have set forth to London, to take possession of the throne. The Pope's bull, excommunicating Elizabeth, had arrived; and so probably had the French fleet for which Mary's

friends were looking out for miles along the rocks from Hartlepool. The Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland were supposed to be marching thither with their forces, in order to proclaim Mary at York, where the Duke of Norfolk had prepared a rising for the moment when the French should have landed. As the Earl paid his respects to his guest, she smiled to think what his obeisance would have been if he had suspected that he was addressing the real Queen of England and Scotland, as well as the titular Queen of France. She reined in her emotions; but her manner was still gayer than for many a day past. The Earl was sensible of it, and involved a compliment in his dutiful inquiry for her health.

She condescended to enlarge the boundary of her walk, as she had liberty to do when the Earl or the Countess was present. The further terrace to which the party now proceeded commanded the three roads which converged towards Tutbury. For some time nothing was visible on them but slow packhorses, and single wayfarers, and a country cart or two: but at length, far away, a cloud of dust arose; and there was a momentary sparkle of a weapon in the sun. Mary stopped for an instant, but only for an instant. The Earl saw her colour rise, and noticed the throb of her ruff, as from a wildly beating heart. He glanced from one to another of the group; but the ladies maintained their composure. He had seen the Queen's secretary busy at his desk as usual; the needleman, whom he had distrusted more and more, was stitching at his board, and had been humming a country song a minute or two ago. It was natural that a party of armed horsemen should rouse many emotions in the poor lady's breast. It must be this, and nothing more. Yet he leaned on the terrace wall, and watched the approaching horsemen so earnestly that he did not hear the ladies withdraw. Mary was anxious now for the privacy of her own apartments.

"That was not the road. You must have made a mistake," said Father Berthon to Polly, when she carried him the news, and asked whether Sampson must not be one of the party. "That road is the London road. The easternmost is the Yorkshire road. I will show you, if the coast is clear. Go and see."

Polly was long gone. The suspense was too much for the practised patience of the disguised priest. He took some silk patterns in his hand, and went forth as if to ask at the porter's room whether certain goods had arrived; but, as soon as he entered the court-yard, now full of reeking horses and their grooms, he was ordered "Back!"—"Back!" and fairly driven away. He saw the Countess; but she was not gracious. He caught a glimpse of the Earl, reading a letter which bore an enormous seal. Among the gabble of the attendants he caught a few words which sent him at once to the Queen.

By a sign from him, the door was closed and fastened: and he prostrated himself before Mary, claiming to be the first to salute her as the reigning Queen of England. The secretary and the ladies proffered their congratulations, and were affectionately desired to reckon always on

the friendship of the sovereign to whom they had been friends in her adversity. Then followed the news.

Who the party were, Father Berthon had not learned, and could not as yet ascertain. No—he had not seen Sampson; he had not seen any face he knew. It would soon be evident who they were: meantime the great event was that the bull of excommunication which dethroned Elizabeth was actually posted on the Castle gate; and not only there, but on the church door; and some of the people had said that it had been found two mornings since posted on the Exchange in London, and on the door of St. Paul's. Mary was Queen indeed; and her ladies might prepare for the progress to London, where her Majesty would no doubt repair without delay. Mary replied that all things should be considered; but she must first retire to her oratory, to gain strength for the part she was now to play.

While she was in that retirement, a busy whispered consultation went on among her attendants. Had the French landed? How far had they yet penetrated? Were the Scots marching down? Had they joined the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland? Was it certain that the country would rise for Mary? or ought she to wait for an escort of troops? Nobody could tell: and they had abundant time for their conjectures, for nobody came near them.

At the end of an hour, they began to suspect that the horsemen were not of Queen Mary's party, but messengers of evil tidings to the Earl. This was in every way true; but not in the precise sense supposed.

By the Earl's gait, as he turned from the terrace and entered his private apartments, it might have been supposed that he had not regained his strength after his illness of the summer. He had been a strong man for weeks, however; but he had received a shock such as might stagger the strongest men.

The Countess scarcely dared to speak to him; but she followed him in, and waited till his conference with the leader of the party just arrived was over.

"Bess!" said he to her when they were alone, "what do you suppose is in this red box?" laying his hand on what stood before him.

She answered by a look which had something like fear in it.

"It is the Great Seal," he said in a whisper.

"What for? Who sent it here?"

"Her Majesty caused it to be sent, by desire of the Council of England,—the urgent desire of the whole Council. Ay! you will not again ask why."

"Yes," said the Countess, though her voice failed her; "I do again ask why."

"For the execution of the Queen of Scots."

"Her execution! you mean her trial!"

"Alas! no. If it were her trial that was decreed, I could prepare for it willingly; for where she breathes, there is treason: and her complicity with these events of to-day is not to be doubted. But to execute her in this, my Castle, without impeachment and defence, is a command which I never thought to receive,—a command such as no

sovereign but a Saracen despot ought to impose on any noble gentleman."

"But will you do it?" the Countess asked, grasping his arm, and gazing in his face.

"I know not," he replied, in a voice of despair. "Never was man in such a strait! And she as blithe this day as an innocent child!"

"I think nothing of that," said Bess. "She is no child, and knows nothing of innocence, and ought never to be gay at heart again."

"Bess, you are so hard!"

"Ah! that is the old story! But am I not always right? Why is she blithe to-day, but because she believes herself Queen of England? And is she not all the gayer for the Pope's bull having been set up on our own gate? That insult to us is the secret of the fine colour in her face this morning."

"How should she know it?"

"That is a question for you to answer. Since you forbade me to trouble her with my presence, the guardianship has been yours. Whether you have done the duty better than I should, let this day's events show."

"Bess, there must be an end of disputing. A day like this is no time for altercation between us. Your husband's honour and safety are at stake—"

"And what of the Queen's? That is of somewhat greater concern, I imagine. I said once that women make the best gaolers. I say now that women make the most loyal subjects. While you are thinking of your own honour and safety, I am thinking of the Queen's."

"Leave me!" cried the irritated Earl.

"I will; and the more readily because the Queen's service demands instant care. The Pope's bull must be torn down from our gate."

"It is done."

"And from the church-door."

"It is done."

"And discovery made of the audacious hand which posted it."

"It is done; and the man is arrested. Felton did it. There is proof which you can hear another time. Will you leave me?"

"When I have heard what you intend to do," coolly replied the Countess, nodding towards the box which contained the perilous licence to destroy the Queen's chief enemy.

"To-day I shall do nothing. I forbid you, Bess, to approach her. Let her have due service, and nothing more. In a few hours she must hear of the disclosure of the conspiracy, and of the desperate peril of her friends. Let her spirits fall by suspense, or the shock may kill her."

"Can you wish that it should not?" the Countess asked: and her husband answered only by a shudder.

Hour after hour passed, and no news arrived to those who sat waiting for it. There were jests, at which Mary herself smiled, on the undignified reluctance of her hosts to inform her of her release. It was exactly like Bess of Hardwick, the ladies said, to suppress good news as long as possible. From the Earl they should have expected something different; but he was no doubt preparing to pay his duty with the greater state, and

to conduct his sovereign through a country which he was raising in her honour. The number of horsemen who were heard and seen to depart in various directions gave some countenance to this idea. Father Berthon, however, became evidently uneasy as the day wore on: and at nightfall he could no longer refrain from seeking news. He did not return. The secretary refused to go in search of him, saying that it was his special duty to abide by the Queen. He feared detention, the ladies whispered to each other. Could it be that the Earl and Countess meant to resist the new order of things!—to resist the Pope, and France, and Spain, and the whole worthy part of the English nation? Such resistance could be but a brief folly.

As doors and windows stood wide, that warm autumn evening, when all were bent, mind and body, on listening, the gentle breeze brought the sound of bells. The church bells were certainly ringing. All spirits brightened, and Mary herself observed that it was cheering to hear some sounds of joy before the first day of her new reign should close. It was surely the strangest accession day that any sovereign of England had ever known.

"And here are other signs, even more sure than the bells," her secretary, De Naon, observed. "If I mistake not, the people are building a bonfire in the meadow below."

Polly, who had been gazing abroad through Father Berthon's glass, now announced that there were bonfires on all the hills round, and cressets were already alight on every church steeple. The whole country would be aglow, as soon as it was dark.

It was this spontaneous illumination which brought the Earl to the Queen's apartments now, instead of the next morning. He begged an audience, and would evidently not have taken a refusal. He desired to see her Grace alone, sending away even the secretary. The ladies persuaded themselves and one another that this reluctance to accept events was ungenerous, disloyal, every way unworthy; and pray Heaven! it might not be dangerous! Yet there was that in the Earl's face, stern and colourless, which made them anxious to believe their own explanation of the mystery of this day.

"He looks not as a subject come to greet a new sovereign," the ladies observed; and De Naon wished their mistress was fairly out of the Castle, and released from a host whose position was one of divided duty. He should not consider the Queen safe till she was among her people, with her nobles and their troops around her.

"Yet see how the country is lighting up," said Lady Janet Hamilton. "Where were there ever signs of popular rejoicing, if not here?"

It was indeed a fine sight,—the kindling of the fires over a wide expanse of varied landscape. The Castle itself was illumined in all its prominent parts by the great bonfire in the meadow below. The flames disclosed the deep glades of the forest, and reddened the stems of the nearer trees; and the rushing Dove was like a river of fire. Crowds gathered in the meadows; and yet there were sounds from afar—shouts and singing which told

of other collections of people about the churches and in the villages. One distant flash after another showed where fresh fires were kindled; and red smoke-clouds floated here and there, as far as anything could be seen.

"See," cried Polly, "how the people below are looking up all at once! Let us go upon the terrace and show them how happy we are."

"Stay!" cried De Naon. "It is not to be thought of."

"But I know them so well!" said Polly. "There can be scarcely a face there that I do not know: and they are so happy! and so are we! See how their faces are all upturned at once!"

"We must withdraw from the windows," De Naon declared. "We may not have been seen; but we must do nothing without the Queen's order;—no, not even rejoice."

His voice chilled the hearts of his companions; and so did the countenance of the Earl as he came forth, and signed to the ladies to return to their mistress. As he opened the door to the corridor, two armed men entered and carried off the secretary.

Mary was not fainting; but she was stunned, though the Earl had discharged his duty as gently as he knew how. He said no word to her of her own danger in his hands. The Countess thought this pusillanimous, and almost disloyal; but it was a point on which the Earl was firm. It might be unnecessary ever to use the warrant which he held: the Queen and the Council might change their minds; time might bring about explanations of many things; and, if the maintenance of the religion and the peace of the realm should be found compatible with the life of the Queen of Scots, she might be spared the knowledge of what was now proposed. The Countess was positively forbidden to reveal the fact of the warrant being in the castle to any person whatever: and the secret was in fact well kept for some years. Bess of Hardwick had not supposed that she could come so near quailing before any event as she now found possible. Many a shudder came over her during the day; and she started from her sleep at night when the thought occurred of the black scaffold and the headman in her own halls, and of a guest, a royal guest, being carried forth a headless corpse from her gates. As she watched the roads for approaching horsemen, forgetting the passage of the hours, she grew more apprehensive of messages from London than the Earl himself.

To Mary the Earl would have given more comfort than terror by producing her death-warrant that night. It was a night never to be referred to again, and such an one as could scarcely have been borne twice. The wreck of hope was complete. The Duke of Norfolk was arrested; the northern Earls were summoned to London, but had fled. No foreign force had arrived to support the Scots; and the Scots had marched back again. The burning of the Bible and Prayer-book in Durham Cathedral had exasperated the whole country round. What the spirit of the realm was might be seen by the way in

which the news was everywhere taken. Everywhere the people turned out for their Protestant Queen, rang their bells, lighted their bonfires, and cursed the Popish witch who betrayed to death every man who came under the glance of her eye, and the tone of her voice. The Earl said as little as he could; and Mary could not make inquiry, because it was her part to appear ignorant of any conspiracy. But what she heard was as much as she could bear. All! all lost! Every one who had perilled all for her, doomed and lost! Her own life a blank! to be passed in a loathed prison like this! A life spent with Bess of Hardwick for a gaoler! And the realm not recovered for the Church, but fresh strength given to the damning heresy of the age! The world seemed God-forsaken that night; and, when morning came, the worn and sleepless group started from each other's looks, and might well bar their doors against all witnesses of their woe.

Yet evil tidings found entrance to them in their closest seclusion. The Countess considered it good for their souls that they should know the mischief for which she considered her royal prisoner responsible. She despised the weakness of concealing from Mary the fact that her head was in the Earl's power; but she was so positively forbidden to disclose the truth that there was no help for it; and she made amends by conveying to the secluded ladies the assurance that they would never again see the pair of devoted anglers fishing in the Dove.

Mr. Felton had been ordered for trial on the charge of posting the Pope's bull on the church-door and the Castle-gate; and the evidence of eye-witnesses left him no chance of escape. His friend would suffer with him; for of their complicity with the conspiracy there could be no doubt. The Countess was less eager to tell of the prospects of the Queen's late needleman. She had been so resolute in rebuking the Earl's suspicions of the clever tailor she had hired for the Queen's service, that she would not believe to the last moment that she had been duped by a popish priest. She pitied him as one of those victims sure to be drawn into the vortex of destruction when unscrupulous treason is making its plunge down the precipice. The poor man would be lost, she said, unless the Earl would allow her to take his case in hand. The Earl committed the case to those whose proper business it was; and the disclosures which ensued humbled the Countess in a very wholesome way. On the day of his execution, she sighed, and said he deserved his fate ten times over for bringing his plots into the house of a good subject, and making a fool of a patron to whom he pretended to defer. The effect of her contrition was seen in her allowing her husband, without any interference, to make his own appointments when the Queen's servants were changed; and when at length he was able to repair to Court to receive further instructions, and, as he hoped, to deliver up the burden of the power over Mary's life, the Lady Bess was really glad to have the assistance of the Earl of Huntingdon in guarding the prisoners till her husband should return to conduct them to Fotheringay Castle.

CHAPTER X. TUTBURY LEFT TO ITSELF.

It was mid-winter before the reek went up once more from the Wise Man's chimney. A few days after the thin blue jet of smoke was first seen from the Castle terrace, now occupied only by sentinels, the returned tenant heard a timid knock at his door. It was Polly, grave and resolute, but plainly in need of resolution.

"May I come in?" she asked.

"That depends on a condition which you can hardly have forgotten, Polly. You must bring me no state secrets, you know. I can hear nothing of any plots."

"I do not forget that, nor—nor some other things you said when I came before. But I am come now to ask,—not to tell."

"You can ask. About the answering, we will see."

"I am so perplexed about something! And I am sure you, who know so many things, can tell me the truth. I want to know whether Sampson Rudd is really a Catholic or a Protestant."

"Sampson Rudd! Why, I thought he was your husband."

"To be sure he is; and that is why it is so necessary for me to know: and nobody but a conjurer could find it out to a certainty. To hear him tell when he and I are alone, and nobody within hearing, of the execution of those gentlemen, Mr. Felton and Mr. Stansbury, one would think he was as true a Catholic as they were; but—"

"Did he see them die?"

"He did. Mr. Felton denied nothing. There would have been no use in it; for there were eyes abroad that night that saw him fasten that terrible paper on the gates. He said he had risked his life for the true religion of the kingdom, and for its true sovereign; as he had failed, he had no more to say but that he trusted that true sovereign would not regret his fate so much as he did her disappointment. Mr. Stansbury spoke quite differently. He said he was not the man to go into any plots beyond that of circumventing salmon in the rivers, and foxes on the moors. Where his friend was, there he was; and therefore such danger as his friend was in, he was in too: but it was his friendship that accidentally brought him there, and not any artful treason. He had been aware of a few things; but no gentleman of spirit would expect him to babble of them: and if he was to die for holding his tongue about other men's secrets, so be it! He had none of his own. He had nothing to repent of; and a man could not die at a better time than when he could say that. Sampson feels all this very much."

"How did her Grace feel it? I suppose she knew it before she left Tutbury?"

"There was no saying how she felt any one thing when there were so many. She cried lapsfuls of tears before I was sent away; and as she rode by in departing, she looked as if her whole life must be as full of tears as her days and nights have been of late. But how to speak of her,—how to think of her now, I don't know, unless I knew what Sampson really is. My father says if I will own myself bewitched by all these

people, he will forgive me; and I can't be sure whether I have been bewitched or not; only, I know that! I had no hand in my little brother's death."

"Certainly,—certainly, Polly. Your father will grow reasonable about that. But how can he and Sampson agree?"

That was the question. Polly sometimes thought Sampson would, after all, go into the pulpit (studying a year for it), if the Earl or anyone would ask him, as had been once thought of; and he certainly spoke of the Protestant confessors abroad as if he had been one with them; yet, not only had Father Berthon married him and Polly, but there was another sign,—nothing could induce Sampson to get rid of something which he carried about with him, and which seemed to Polly very dangerous. She feared she was wrong in bringing it; but she did so need advice from one who knew everything! And she produced the medal. Was it, or was it not, of the nature of a charm? If it was dangerous, might she drop it into the Dove, and say she had lost it?"

After close examination, the Wise Man told her she must restore it to her husband, and never tell that any one had seen it. What danger there was in it, her husband must be aware of. As for the rest,—the question of Catholic and Protestant,—how was it with Polly herself? Her position at home seemed to depend on that.

This was the very difficulty. Polly really had no idea what was true, when Father Berthon had told her one thing, and Dr. Pantlin had said the very opposite, and every church preacher had abused Dr. Pantlin. If she could find out what Sampson really believed, she would be of his mind: and this the Wise Man thought was decidedly the best way.

But the neighbours! They would never leave her in peace about her little brother having died when all the household but herself were in the harvest-field. Cicely and Dolly would always look askance at her on account of what they said they had seen: and she was very unhappy.

The Wise Man had skill enough to see what counsel would be welcome. There were many places in England now where Sampson's handicraft prospered and was valued; and nowhere more than in a part of London where silk-weavers from foreign parts were said to have settled in great numbers. Sampson must know all about those people and their trade. He had better give his mind to his loom, whether he lived in one place or another.

There was one person in the neighbourhood of Tutbury Castle who was not surprised to hear, in early spring, that Sampson and Polly Rudd had stolen away one day, while the household were out sowing. Three years after, it was reported by the pedlars who visited Needwood Forest that the black silk hood and mantle which were a part of Queen Bess's mourning for the Huguenots, after St. Bartholomew's day, were from the loom of one Sampson Rudd, who was thenceforth the craftsman in silk wares most favoured by the whole Court.

(Conclusion.)